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Teachers' Federation Celebrates 4th Annual Day

Palestinian teachers in the occupied territories celebrated the annual Teachers' Day December 14 with a popular meeting at the Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre in Jerusalem. Unlike in previous years, the Israeli authorities did not try to stop the meeting.

More than 300 people, mostly teachers from various parts of the West Bank, participated in the meeting, which started at 9:30 am with a moment of silence in memory of Palestinian martyrs who died while struggling for Palestinian rights. This was followed by speakers representing various educational and national institutions who spoke about problems of education in the West Bank and about the welfare of Palestinian teachers, especially those who work in government schools.

School teacher Issa al-Azzeh read a speech on behalf of the Federation of Employees in the Education Sector in the West Bank, which organised the meeting. The federation began in 1982 as a committee to coordinate activities between the General Committee of Government School Teachers, the Union of Teachers in Private Schools, the Union of UNRWA School Teachers and the Union of Higher Education Employees. In the speech he recalled the struggle Palestinian teachers in government-run schools had to go through to create their union. He also called for more solidarity from teachers in order to help them achieve their goals. "The suffering of teachers is part of the suffering of the Palestinian people. Their struggle is part of the Palestinian struggle; they are all a direct result of Israeli occupation," he said.

Speaking on the conditions which prevail in most government-run West Bank schools, al-Azzeh observed that most schools lack libraries, laboratories and even health facilities. He said some schools are extremely cold, damp and leak water in winter but authorities do little to repair them. The drop-out rate was increasing as a result of the poor study conditions, he added. Al-Azzeh also referred to conditions in refugee camps, where the majority of the population is school-age children and the most severe problem is settler terror. He singled out Dheisheh camp near Bethlehem as a prime example of settler terror.

As far as higher education is concerned, the teacher said that having failed to impose Military Order 854 by force, the Israelis have resorted to repeated closures of universities, refusing their building permit applications, refusing work permits for non-resident Palestinians and foreign teachers and restricting the import of books and periodicals,

Al-Azzeh called for united efforts on the part of all educational institutions and employees in order to confront Israeli harassment, whether from settlers or authorities. He called for immediate national dialogue between PLO factions in the basis of the Aden-Algiers agreement.

Dr Thabet Thabet, head of the Dentists' Union, said in a speech on behalf of national institutions in the occupied territories that supporting teachers "who are confronting the policy of inadequate education" is a national duty.

Jamal Banoura read a speech on behalf of the General Committee for Government School Teachers in West Bank, a founding member of the Federation of Employees in the Education Sector. He gave a more detailed account of conditions in government-run schools. Among the many harassments against teachers and students he listed, the newly adopted policy of hiring teachers on yearly contracts and the arrest of *tawjihi* students during matriculation exams were the most severe. He explained that the new hiring system allows the Israelis to get rid of politically active teachers without facing any of the legal consequences. Student arrests are punishments usually inflicted on politically active nationalist students.

Teachers publicly complained during the meeting that the Palestinian Council of Higher Education, responsible for overseeing higher education in the occupied territories, had not responded to their invitation to deliver a speech. CHE head Dr Anton Sansour later told *Al Fajr* the council never received an invitation. "Obviously, the message was not delivered for some reason. Otherwise we would have attended," he said. Dr Sansour added that there had been some technical problems lately with delivering messages to and from the CHE.

Celebrating teachers received a number of solidarity telegrammes from labour unions, student councils, voluntary work committees and women's unions, as well as from nationalist figures. The messages from elected mayors Bassam Shaka'a of Nablus and Wahid al-Hamdallah of Anabta drew a great deal of applause from the participants. Both mayors saluted teachers on their national day and expressed support for their "just struggle to establish a union to ensure their professional rights."

The celebration also included two dancing and singing presentations by children from the Ramallah branch of the Working Women's Committee. Eight girls wearing quadricoloured flags sang a children's song entitled "Our Land Is Imprisoned, Surrounded by Wolves." The second song, sung by three of the eight children, was one of Marcel Khalifeh's famous compositions.

The popular Palestinian singer Rajeh Salfiti sang some of his renowned works.

At the end of the celebration meeting, Dr Thabet, representing national institutions in the occupied territories, presented some 112 teachers or their families with honourary gifts. The Union of Employees in the Education Sector prepared the gifts for outstanding teachers and for those punished by the Israelis for their political views. The gifts were little shields made of olive wood with the name of the honoured teacher engraved on them.

Members of the General Committee of Government School Teachers in the West Bank said they were very pleased with the attendance at the celebration. Taha Nassar, a member of the committee from Hebron, said the number of attendees reflected the interest which Palestinians and national institutions have in the education sector. Fadwa Labadi, another member of the committee, said attendance this year was the highest in four years, which shows that the just struggle of teachers is making considerable progress at the grassroots level.

Responding to the committee's efforts to establish a union for the government school teachers, Jamal Banoura said teachers have hired a lawyer to pursue the case in court. He said the lawyer, Abed Aseali, has sent a notice of the demand to the West Bank military governorate's legal advisor and is now awaiting a response.

The General Committee of Government School Teachers was established in 1980 after the famous 100-day strike by 3000 teachers for better wages and an improved social welfare system. The strike, the first ever staged by government employees since the occupation of the West Bank, ended without substantial gains. It did, however, help to promote the idea of unionised work.

UN Condemns Israel In 8 New Resolutions

Israel was again reprimanded in the United Nations when a large majority of the international organisation's members approved November 30 eight resolutions condemning Israeli actions in the occupied territories. Israel was the only country voting against all eight resolutions, with the United States voting against three and abstaining or registering no vote on the other five. The rest of the UN community either voted in favour of the resolutions, abstained, or did not vote at all.

The voting took place in the special political committee of the United Nations following a week-long deliberation on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Delegates from several countries spoke throughout the week condemning Israel for denying the rights of Palestinians to "a peaceful and secure" life in their homeland.

One of the adopted resolutions called on Israel to release all political prisoners. This included Ziad Abu Ein, who was not released in a PLO-Israel prisoners' exchange last year even though he was supposed to have been set free. The resolution received 101 votes in favour, two votes — the US and Israel — against, and 11 abstentions.

The US and Israel voted against a resolution condemning Israeli measures against Palestinian students and academic institutions in the occupied territories. Twenty six countries abstained while 93 voted in favour.

The committee approved a resolution calling on Israel to brief the UN Secretary-General on the outcome of the investigation and trial of those who attempted to assassinate Nablus, Ramallah and al-Bireh mayors. The US and Israel voted against, Zaire abstained and 121 nations voted in favour of the resolution.

In another resolution that received 119 supporting votes with Israel the sole opponent, the UN reaffirmed that articles of the Geneva Convention are still applicable to the land occupied by Israel in 1967.

The committee also urged the UN General Assembly to demand that Israel abide by the articles of the Geneva Convention regarding protection of civilians during war. Israel opposed, the US and two other nations abstained and 117 voted in favour of the recommendation.

Another resolution supported by 117 nations demands that Israel halt any actions that may alter the legal status, geography or demographic structure of the occupied Palestinian areas. Israel voted against and the US abstained.

A resolution demanding that Israel cancel illegal measures adopted by the military government imprisoning and later deporting Hebron and Halhoul mayors and Hebron's Islamic judge received 121 supporting votes with the US abstaining.

The committee also approved by 116 votes to one a resolution condemning Israel for not heeding decisions made by the General Assembly and the Security Council regarding annexation of the Golan Heights which the UN considers illegal. Three nations abstained on the vote.

Dheisheh Family Complains About Police Raid, Beatings

Imad Abdal-Jawad, a blacksmith from Dheisheh refugee camp, filed a police complaint December 12 against officers and border guards in the Bethlehem region. Jawad says he, his mother and his sister were beated by Bethlehem border guards and senior Israeli officers during a raid on Abd al-Jawad's Dheisheh home.

Abd al-Jawad said in his complaint that a number of Israeli soldiers broke into his house, destroying the front door, on December 1 at 1:00 pm. The soldiers asked his mother where he could be found. Apparently displeased with her answer that Abd al-Jawad was in Bethlehem, the soldiers began to beat and insult her. According to Abd al-Jawad, when his sister protested the beating of her arthritic mother, she was also beaten. Abd al-Jawad said soldiers then rampaged through the house, breaking windows. They left after two-and-a-half hours.

On December 4, Abd al-Jawad was stopped by soldiers while walking with three other residents in the camp at 10:30 pm. Soldiers confiscated their identity cards and ordered them into an awaiting jeep. Abd al-Jawad said they were then taken to the military headquarters in Bethlehem where they were forced to kneel in the yard for several hours. An Israeli officer known as captain "Mufid" then ordered Abd al-Jawad into his office where he was verbally insulted and severely beaten on his feet by two soldiers. Unable to stand as he was ordered, he was then beaten again with a heavy belt.

According to Abd al-Jawad, he was then taken to the square where he was summoned to appear before an officer named "Shmulik." He was beaten in the officer's quarters until he fainted. He said an officer, "Karim Haim," also verbally threatened him.

Abd al-Jawad was released the next day at 4:30 pm. He then went to Jerusalem advocate Felicia Langer and drafted his complaint.

Langer told *Al Fajr* her client was beaten and his family members harassed in order to terrorise them. Abd al-Jawad, along with others in Dheisheh, signed a complaint several months ago which demanded that the Israeli High Court look into the military use of collective punishment. The complaint is still under review in the court. On December 6 the court issued an order *nisi* ordering the West Bank military commander to appear before the court December 27 to explain the use of collective punishment against camp residents. He will also be questioned about the closure of camp entrances and his failure to prevent settler harassment of the camp.

Syrian Druze in Golan Expect Increased Bullying

The deputy of the Druze Iniative Committee in solidarity with the Golan Heights charged this week that the Israeli media in cooperation with the government is paving the way for a campaign against Syrian Druze residents of the Golan. Salman Natour, a Palestinian Druze from the Galilee, told *Al Fajr*, "Israeli newspapers' claim that the few Golan residents who accepted Israeli citizenship have been 'persecuted' by Druze nationalists is intended to provide authorities with the needed justifications for such a campaign."

After general elections in Israel last July, 18 months after the Israeli-declared annexation of the Syrian territory, Golan Heights residents discovered that 200 of the 15,000 residents voted, meaning they had accepted a change of nationality. In response local Druze religious leaders instituted a social and religious boycott against the 200 whom they regarded as collaborators.

Salman Natour

According to the boycott, those holders of Israeli citizenship who broke the national and religious stands of Druze residents during and after their long strike in February 1982 are unable to enter into mosques and *Khelweh*, Druze religious shrines. Nor can the collaborators send their children to local schools. Natour said that, in order to break the unity of the Druze community from within, a Druze-Zionist association was formed to back those collaborators.

Israeli newspapers gave a great deal of coverage last week to three residents from Bog'ata who held Israeli citizenship and were prevented from entering a *Khelweh* in the village.

Druze citizenship holders complained to Israeli authorities that they will be unable to perform their religious ceremonies in the future. They asked the Israeli government for concrete actions to back them against the other residents whom they called "pro-Syrians."

Israeli authorities are still refusing to permit over 500 Druze residents in the Golan Heights to cross the border to Syria to receive medical treatment in hospitals there despite the precedent that two residents — one from Beq'ata and the other from Majdal Shams — went to Syria through the intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Golan residents said "the Israeli authorities refusal to supply them with permits is part of a policy to subdue Druze nationalists. They added that only Druze with Israeli citizenship cards are given facilities. Golan residents complained that Israeli media and the Druze Zionist association are campaigning against them.

Several Israeli newspapers carried reports December 9 that scores of Druze want to abandon Israeli citizenship because of the effectiveness of the boycott, which the Hebrew press termed "pro-Syrian harassments."

Dura Schoolkids Arrested For Anti-Occupation Protests

In a new development in the Hebron area, Israeli military units staged three daytime raids November 29 to December 7 in the town of Dura in the Hebron District, arresting more than 26 young men throughout the week. The detainees, mostly from Salah al-Din preparatory school, face charges of demonstrating and throwing stones at soldiers, the Dura police station and the municipal building.

Dura residents marked the 37th anniversary of the UN partition plan Novemebr 29 with demonstrations. The demonstrators walked through Dura streets shouting national slogans and throwing stones at the police station and the municipal building. The municipality has been run by an appointed committee since the municipal council elected in 1976 was dismissed in 1982. Dura residents reported that glass windows and the signboard at the police station were smashed.

Moments after the anniversary demonstration, the deputy military governor in Hebron arrived at the scene accompanied by eight military and police vehicles. They then proceeded to homes of Dura residents, arresting eight. Detainees were immediately taken to Fara'a jail. An additional 18 students were arrested during two successive raids December 6 and 7.

Among the 26 imprisoned were Deyab Mohammed Shaker, 14, and Bassam Sweiti, 15, son and nephew of Mohammed Shaker Sweiti (Abu Farid), the elected deputy mayor of Dura municipality who was dismissed in 1982. His wife, Um Farid, told *Al Fajr* that her son Deyab and his cousin Bassam neither demonstrated nor threw stones. They were home at the time of the demonstration. She said, "Israeli soldiers broke into our house on November 29, after Abdel Fattah Dudin, the head of the municipal committee, told them stones were hurled from the direction of our house." Um Farid added, "This is hostility, and obvious hatred," from Dudin.

Journalist Must Remain in Dheisheh

The Israeli military objections committee recommended December 9 that an order which has confined journalist Hamdi Farraj to Dheisheh refugee camp remain in force. This recommendation came after the Israeli secret service (Shin Bet) submitted a classified file on the case to the military committee.

Farraj, a columnist for *al-Mithaq* daily, was placed under town arrest for the first time on June 14, 1983 for unspecified "security reasons." The six-month order has been renewed three times.

The military objections committee, which is the only body authorised to hear appeals against military orders, gave the recommendation at the end of a closed session held at Israeli military court in Ramallah. Farraj's lawyer, Lea Tsemel, was not allowed to attend the session on the pretext that secret information was to be presented before the committee.

Farraj, a former member of the administrative committee of the Arab Journalists' Association and previosly senior editor for the now closed *al-Shira'* magazine, appealed to the body of military officers against the town arrest last June. The committee held one session in August during which the lawyer explained her appeal. The committee postponed giving a final recommendation until it heard the prosecution's reply.

The committee, which is usually composed of Israeli military officers and at least one member with legal background, can only make recommendations to the area military governor or commender, who makes the final ruling on any case. The committee has rarely given a recommendation in favour of Palestinian defendants.

Palestinian Grafitti Shuts Hebron Market

Israeli settlers, soldiers and policemen closed down Hebron's central Qazzazin market for one day and detained shopkeepers December 5 when they discovered Palestinian flags had been spray painted on a stone memorial erected in 1980 for Kiryat Arbasettler, Yehoshua' Sallouma, the first settler to be killed in Hebron.

A butcher in the market who refused to give his name told *Al Fajr* that more than 30 settlers, all armed with automatic rifles, flooded the neighbourhood Wednesday morning, closed off the Arab market area and held prayer on the site. "The settlers, each carrying a prayerbook, stood around the stone monument praying and crying," one shopowner said. Soldiers and policemen stood guard over the settlers.

Israeli police then led 16 shopowners, whose stores are located nearest to the memorial stone, to the local police station and held them in punitive detention until evening. The butcher charged that police were bowing to settler pressure. "They did not accuse us of anything, or even question any of us," he said. Before they were released that evening, a police officer cautioned them to notify the police station if they again notice grafitti on the memorial.

At least three times in the past Israeli settlers have closed off the vital market area and harassed shopowners upon discovering grafitti on the memorial. On some occasions, they have forced neighbourhood residents to clean up the settler memorial at gunpoint.

The butcher said police did not have the right to detain any shopowners. "How do I know it was not a settler who painted the stone in order to create excuses to harass us?" he added.

Interview with Ahmad Hamzeh Natsheh:

Independence, National Unity Weakened by Amman PNC

The only named member of the Palestine National Council living in the occupied territories is Ahmad Hamzeh Natsheh, a physician from Hebron. Since being permitted to return to his West Bank home following deportation by Israeli military authorities in 1976, Dr Natsheh has been under travel restrictions and town arrest. He was one of the targets selected by the Jewish terror underground for assassination in 1980, as a member of the National Guidance Committee. His house has been stoned, photographed and kept under surveillance by soldiers and Israeli settlers. The last stoning incident was in October. Dr Natsheh is currently fighting for an exit visa to travel to France for a post-operative eye exam.

Anita Vitullo interviewed Dr Natsheh about the recent PNC and its effects on struggle in the occupied territories.

Q: You are an official member of the PNC, the only official member living in the occupied territories. What were the circumstances under which you were made a member?

A: As you know, I was deported before the municipal elections in 1976. I was running for mayor of Hebron and when they realised I had a good chance of winning the elections, they used the opportunity to deport me, thinking this would favour the mayor of Hebron at that time, Sheikh Ali Jabari. When I was deported, I was considered by the members of the PNC as a deportee — because there is a category in the PNC for deportees, those who were expelled. When I was allowed to come back, my name stayed on the list as a member and every time there was a meeting I couldn't attend. I attended the 13th PNC meeting which was held in Cairo. After that I asked for permission to go to Damascus for the 14th PNC. I was told I could go but I could not return to the West Bank.

Q: The PNC just concluded its 17th session. What was your feeling about just the fact that it was convened at this time and in this location?

A: Well, I feel very sorry that it was convened in the way it was. I myself was against the convening under these conditions. There were two objections: to the timing — it could have been convened in far better conditions with the participation of most of the Palestinian organisations and parties. The second objection is the place — it was not a convenient place for having such a meeting. People say it was illegal, that the quorum was contrived. But it was convened and, in spite of the fact it happened in this way, everyone should take it as a fact. It should not be the end of the world. It should be taken as it is, and try to take some positive positions especially the decision concerning keeping the door open for further attempts and dialogue to achieve Palestinian national unity.

Q: What do you mean the place was not "convenient"?

A: I think another Arab country would have been more accepted. Many people were against convening in Amman itself.

Q: Do you think the location had any influence on the outcome of the resolutions themselves? If so, in what way?

A: I think, yes. As we saw in the international press, it was a demonstration of support for the Jordanian regime. Nobody can deny this. It was exploited, whether they wanted it or not. It was transformed into a kind of demonstration for the regime.

Q: Do you think this set the PLO back in time; will it have a long-term effect for the organisation?

A: Yes, because it gave an opportunity to the people who opposed convening the PNC at this time and in this place to accuse those who attended, especially among the leadership of the PLO, that they intended to collaborate with the Jordanian regime in order to accept the projected American plans.

Q: Do you think they are right in saying this?

A: Well, according to the decision which kept the door open for entering such solutions: the PNC did not want to decide to accept the Jordanian initiative but at the same time they left this for the Executive Committee. This is very dangerous because a decision as serious as this should be dealt with definitely by the whole organisation. It's not a very easy question, and the Executive Committee, as its name suggests, should execute what the Palestinian National Council decides. So why didn't they decide yes or no? They left it aside and gave a mandate to the Executive Committee to decide.

Q: Why didn't they decide? What was their strategy?

A: I think they didn't want to close the door to such solutions. They are hesitating and they don't have the courage to say no, or yes.

Q: Will the Executive Committee be more courageous?

A: We don't know. But it is a decision that should be decided by all parties, and not by only 10 or 12 people.

Q: The Jordanian initiative was multi-faceted: a joint initiative with the PLO on the basis of 242, which almost everyone rejects, and a call for an international conference, which almost everyone accepts. The idea of a joint initiative with Jordan, however, was accepted by the PNC, was it not?

A: I think even accepting part of the initiative is dangerous because it keeps the door open to more and more concessions. I don't think accepting a conference at this time is wrong, but accepting it as part of a separate initiative of one single Arab government is dangerous because this could lead to a point of accepting more and more concessions.

Q: Would you say the independence of Palestinian decision-making was threatened, if not weakened, by what happened in Amman?

A: Well, this question of the independence of Palestinian decision-making was not strengthened. Obviously, it is a correct slogan and we should implement it and respect it. But what happened in Amman is something humorous. We say in Arabic: Someone who ran from the rain and stood under the gutter. We wanted to run away from the influence of the Syrians and we were under another influence — the Jordanians. I don't think holding the meeting in Amman helped the implementation of this slogan. Whether we like it or not, the decisions were influenced.

Q: If you had been allowed to attend, would you have?

A: No.

Q: What about the other slogan that was used at the PNC: the call for national unity? What is the status of Palestinian national unity?

A: Every Palestinian is speaking about achieving national unity. But there is a big difference between saying and doing. It is not enough to talk about it; everyone should work to achieve it. I think what happened in Amman did not help the process of national unity. This deepened the split in the Palestinian national liberation movement, first. Second, it did not create a favourable atmosphere for national unity. On the contrary, it had a negative effect because many of the speakers dedicated their speeches to attacking the other side, especially the Syrians.

The other side, especially the National Alliance, took the opportunity, through Syrian TV and the press, to counter-attack, to the point where it was something regrettable — reaching insults, name-calling, accusing someone of being a "traitor" — do you know what this means? It is something awful. The Democratic Alliance took a position which to my mind is a correct one.

Q: Is there any hope for reconciliation with the National Alliance?

A: That is why I was against the timing of the meeting. Because I think if we could have avoided the meeting under such circumstances, maybe it could have occurred. The Arabs are known: one day they are fighting and 24 hours later they are kissing each other. Everything was possible. I think now everything is still possible, in spite of everything. But I want to say, what happened in Amman pushed both sides far from each other.

Q: Do you believe there is now weakness within the Democratic Alliance because of the stand of the PFLP against attending the Executive Committee meeting?

A: There are some differences but nevertheless they had a common decision from the four parties and I think they can play a primary role in mediating between both sides with the help of Arab countries, like Algeria and South Yemen, and some foreign countries, friends of the Palestinians who hope Palestinian nationality will be realised as soon as possible like the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, and many friendly countries like the non-aligned countries.

Q: What is the status of the Aden-Algiers agreement; is it dead letter?

A: I don't think it is dead. It still constitutes a solid base to work upon. I think that the Democratic Alliance should continue their efforts toward working for national unity on the basis of the Aden-Algiers agreement.

Q: Do you believe it was violated by the holding of the PNC?

A: I believe so, but according to the decisions that were taken in Amman, they opened a very big door to continue the dialogue with the Democratic Alliance at least.

Q: What do you think will emerge from the new Jordanian-Egyptian axis that appears to be forming?

A: I think nothing positive: on the contrary. As you remember before the visit of Sadat to the Knesset, everyone was talking about convening the Geneva conference; everyone thought it would be held. Even the two superpowers met and published their joint declaration just a few days before Sadat's visit and the start of the Camp David process.

So everyone forgot all about the Geneva conference. No one could speak about it because it was replaced by Camp David. And the Americans even retreated from the declaration, changed their minds because they had their own plan without the Soviet Union.

So now everyone knows who benefited from all of it. Nothing was done for the Palestinian question. But during this period, from 1977 until now, the Zionists gained a lot, creating a *fait accompli* in the occupied territories — land confiscation, construction of colonies, preparation of the occupied territories for annexation — from economic to psychological measures.

I'm afraid what will happen now if they start a similar initiative will be the same: nothing will come out of it but gains for the Zionists.

Q: It seems what is different this year from 1977 is the participation of some people from the occupied territories in this move toward an initiative — although only a few people are involved from the West Bank and Gaza. How would you assess the mood in the occupied territories right now towards these two channels: toward continued struggle or towards an initiative?

continued on page 7

An American anti-Zionist Jew compares the massacres at Sabra and Shatila to Deir Yassin in 1948. Alfred Lilienthal builds a case against Israel and its media and political friends, in remarks made at a commemoration on the second anniversary of the Beirut camp massacres.

Everyone Culpable for Sabra - Shatila Massacres

Nothing since the appearance of the Israeli state on May 15, 1948 shook the world as did the monstrous September 16-18 massacres of men, women and children in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. Their exact number, never finally determined because of mass graves and human remains which remained under bulldozed buildings, is no more important that the precise number of Jews murdered by the Nazis. This slaughter, climaxing the inhuman assault on the Palestinian and Lebanese inhabitants of Beirut and south Lebanon, will take its place in the annals of history alongside the barbarism of Lidice and Babi Yar.

The many judicial inquiries into the tragedy, including that of the Kahan Commission, ought not have had, but did, any difficult in placing responsibility for this tragedy on the guilty ones. When Yasir Arafat reached his decision in early July to leave Beirut, his announced major concern was the security of the thousands of Palestinian refugeed civilians who would be left behind without PLO protection. An integral part of the US-Philip Habib-negotiated PLO exodus from Beirut was the understanding that Phalangist militiamen would not accompany Israeli tanks entering west Beirut and that the international peacekeeping force of the US, France and Italy would be deployed in the western sector until the Lebanese army was able to take over to enforce law and order.

This agreement was violated when the Israelis used the September assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel as an excuse for re-entering west Beirut in the guise of "preventing the danger of violence, bloodshed and anarchy," according to the Israeli cabinet pronouncement. Gemayel's Christian Phalangist militiamen, long bitter enemies of Palestinian and Lebanese Muslims, did accompany the Israeli returnees as did trained militiamen of major Sa'ad Haddad, Tel Aviv's ally who ruled the Israeli enclave in south Lebanon. These militiamen entered the two camps with the full knowledge of the Israeli army, which provided them with at least some of their arms and provisions and helped them with flares for nighttime operations.

Although mindful of the past atrocities committed during the Lebanese civil wars (1958 and 1975-80), the Israelis entrusted these militiamen with the task of cleansing the camps of PLO guerrillas alleged to be hiding there. While the arms of all Muslim groups in west Beirut had been confiscated by the Israelis, those of the Phalangist militiamen, an illegal force under the terms of the Habib agreement, had not been.

Sniper fire and Israeli shelling around the camps preceded the shooting and stabbing of civilians in Shatila which was carried out indiscriminately after the arrival of the Phalangist and Haddad militiamen. The latter was largely composed of men from three Christian villages which were racked by Palestinian forces during the civil war in retaliation for attacks on Palestinians by Christian militiamen. A Phalangist from Damour told a Lebanese soldier: "We have been waiting a long time for this day."

The world is by now familiar with the horrible details of the camp tragedy, so suffice it to point out this in retrospect. The Israeli army had encircled and closed off the camp areas. And, according to the lengthy account in the Sunday *New York Times* of September 20, the mass of the killings was clearly discernible from the Israeli army observation post, manned during the time of the massacre, as evidenced by Hebrew language newspapers dated Thursday 16 and Friday 17. "From the moment they entered the camp," according to witnesses, "the militiamen made no apparent effort to distinguish between Palestinians and Lebanese, let alone among men, women and children. The victims were killed at random or lined up against the walls and shot. Some had their throats slit while others were mutilated with axes." What added to the horror of some of the victims was to be confronted with the sight of other bodies moments before they were themselves shot.

Gunfire was heard by the Israeli army the first evening of the massacre and escapees further carried the story of what was happening. Despite this mounting evidence, Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, the minister of trade and industry in the new Israeli unity government, told the militiamen they could stay in the camps until Saturday morning. The murders continued until they left. The slaughter meanwhile moved from Shatila camp northward to Sabra and also encompassed the nearby Akka and Gaza Hospitals.

Hirsh Goodman, military correspondent of *The Jerusalem Post*, who in the latest issue of *Atlantic Monthly* tries to exculpate the Israeli forces for the 1967 attack on the *USS Liberty*, reported he had been shown a cable sent at 11 pm Thursday from the head of Phalangist units in Shatila to the Israeli command in east Beirut: "To this time we have killed 300 civilians and terrorists." The cable had been immediately distributed to the Israeli command and sent to Tel Aviv.

Two days later on Saturday at noon a spokesperson for the Israeli army denied any knowledge of the massacres and emphasised the fact that "there is no Israeli presence in the camps themselves." Sharon admitted that 81 millimetre flares had been requested by the Phalangists to light their way.

Prime Minister Begin defended his defence minister and vehemently dismissed the charge of Israeli complicity as a "blood libel." His and Sharon's insistence that they had not known conjured up the image of "good" Germans who insisted they had not known and of whom Begin himself is so contemptuous.

In the course of defending Sharon, one recalls that Begin went out of his way in the debate to disavow his responsibility for the April 9, 1948 massacre of Deir Yassin, in which 254 Palestinian men, women and children were murdered and their bodies thrown down a well. He stated he had not been there and knew nothing of it until after the fact. *Times* correspondent David K Shipler's brief reference to these earlier Zionist killings was typical of his paper's slantings. He stated that the village was considered an enemy military stronghold by the Irgun and that "Israel suffered four dead and nearly 40 wounded, leaving dozens of dead Arabs." Dozens is hardly the way to describe 254! Further, the overwhelming evidence, supported by journalists and historians of the time and set forth in the Collins-Lapierre book, *O, Jerusalem*, was that this little village had done nothing to provoke the attack on the Muslim sabbath and had, in fact, lived peaceably with the Jewish suburbs surrounding it. The villagers had reportedly collaborated with the Jewish Agency, as Jon Kimche reported in *Seven Fallen Pillars*, and was said by a Jewish newspaper to have actually driven out some Arab militants.

Sabra... "These dead shall not have died in vain" **... and Shatila**

Begin claimed Sharon was no more guilty of what took place at the Palestinian camps in Lebanon than he had been for Deir Yassin. If, as Shipler pointed out, the name Deir Yassin is "scarcely known outside the Middle East, except to those who follow the region," why is this so? It is because of the media, including his newspaper, which imposed a near blackout on this incident when it occurred and, even more so, when it should have been prominently called to public attention 30 years later at the time of Begin's election in May 1977. Then the media, led by the *Times*, dishonestly built a different face for Begin. (For details, see *The Zionist Connection*, pages 346-355.)

The US media, because it helped build a compliant American public and an enslaved Jewish community, must share the guilt for Sabra and Shatila, particularly Safire, Walters, Kraft, Wallace and Kalb. They have never heard the words of St Louis Rabbi Jerome Grollman, who spoke out against Sabra and Shatila. "We know we must choose Jeremiah, not Begin. We must side with Isaiah, not Sharon."

In their relentless quest for the Jewish vote and dollars to maintain themselves in office, the supine politicians in Congress must also share in the guilt of the Lebanese massacres. They sent the weapons with which the camp inhabitants were murdered. Today they are responsible for the US$2.75 million going to enable Israel to maintain its settlements in occupied territory and the suppression and repression of the

continued on page 7

The Dawn
AL FAJR

AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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Camps As Fortresses

In the occupied territories this year, Israeli authorities made physical inroads to change the geography and demograpy of the area through land confiscations, settlement building, zoning restrictions, and Israelisation of the municipalities. Meanwhile it has tried to create a 'positive' face for those elements looking for minor changes in 'quality-of-life': a hospital here, a factory there, a needed licence, a tax reduction.

The occupation authorities have not made advances where they have most deerly wanted to. After 17 years of occupation, resistance has not been quelled in the West Bank and Gaza. With their large – and increasingly disgruntled – soldier force, host of military orders and army of armed settlers, the Israeli government still does not feel secure from young boys throwing stones. Their solution: to remove residents *en masse*, dismantle camps, destroy roadside shops, build prison-high walls around schools. Harass, intimidate, threaten. Detain, arrest, imprison. Town arrest, exile, deport.

The Israeli military system has failed to create an occupied people. It is now using its Eitans and Levingers and Kahanes and Cohens and its terror underground to create the proper fascistic atmosphere for a right-wing swell to carry out the radical programme it has developed to obliterate Palestinian nationalism.

Dheisheh camp stands in its way, the symbol of the fortress of the Palestinian people's national identity. We will watch how the Israeli military government deals with the camps and know and understand its attitude toward all Palestinians. And we ask that they understand that resistance from the camps is a united protest, one stone is one thousand.

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One Prisoner's Life

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, DC Correspondent

"The struggles of the Palestinian prisoners," said Hamdallah al-Aloul of Nablus, the West Bank, "were never individuals' acts, they were always a collective effort." Hamdallah was one of the Palestinian prisoners released in November 1983 under the prisoner exchange agreement between the PLO and Israel under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Hamdallah was born in Nablus in 1953, while the West Bank was still under Jordanian control. "Our childhood," he said, "was one where our love for our country" was predominent. "Our childhood stories were about Haifa, Jaffa, Acre and Safad, as much as about Jerusalem. We grew up close to where our people from 1948 were cramped in refugee camps in poverty and deprivation."

This left its imprint on Hamdallah and many others of his generation. This reality, he continued, "was topped by the speeches of the late Nasser of Egypt, by stories about the Algerian war of independence, by the heroine Jamila Bouheirad and by the Yemen Revolution." They found expression later when time came to face the Israeli occupier.

The 'Half Penny Project'

Hamdallah said that following the occupation of 1967, "the situation for all of us was very oppressive, especially as it was the formative period of our lives." The occupation authorities were humiliating, he said, confiscating Palestinian land, expelling people and "pursuing our brothers and sisters outside Palestine." As 13 or 14-year-olds, "we had to find means to express our brotherhood with our people on the one hand and to stand up to the occupation authorities, on the other."

The first acts, he said, were to enroll in local charitable associations. "I remember there was an association called "The Half Penny Association" of the women's union which sought youths to collect funds for charitable purposes." He enlisted.

The occupation authorities escalated their aggression against the people and against Hamdallah's fellow students. "When I was 15," he said, "I was arrested for no other reason than that my brother Mahmoud was in prison at the time." He tells of beatings by the Israeli jailors, singling out Miki Golan, the director of Nablus prison at that time, who, he said, beat and tortured him. "This and other similar experiences," he said with signs of anger clearly on his face, "completed the formulation of my personality" and thus with a group of similar desperate, angry Palestinians he took a step closer to challenging the Israeli authorities.

Hamdallah and his friends, reflecting their indentification with the 1952 Nasser's "free officers" group in Egypt, established a local group, giving it the name "The Free People." Their aim, he said, "was to write and distribute anti-Israeli occupation material," a simple reply to Israel's attacks on the people. The battle of Karameh, 1968, was a turning point and they decided to increase their challenges.

The September 1970 civil war in Jordan, he said, and "the expulsion of our people from there made each one of us in the territories decide on our own ways we can support the Palestinian revolution." Hamdallah decided to actively join the ranks of the revolution. "I left the West Bank pretending that I was going to visit my sister in Sweden but the objective was to join the resistance." Once out, he said, he joined one of the Palestinian groups and was trained militarily and exposed "to the struggles' literature, consciousness raising and culture." Then he returned to the battleground he chose to fight from.

The First of Six Operations

Upon his return to the West Bank, Hamdallah began to organise his friends, talk to them about the need to do something, debate with them politically, but "most importantly," he said, to prepare them for the serious challenge with the occupation authorities.

The state of preparation for the military operations, he said, lasted until July 1972, when Israeli forces were bombing and shelling Palestinian camps both in north and south Lebanon, such as Baddawi, Nahr al-Bared, Rashidiya and more. "A decision was made immediately," he said, "to carry out the operations we were trained and waiting for." The decision, he said, was "to give them [Israel] some of their own medicine."

Four days later "I placed my first [explosive device] in the Mamilla district of Jerusalem, the centre of the city." The bomb was placed in a supermarket and it went off... "The Israeli occupiers," Hamdallah said, "had to feel that they too could become a target and their civilians as well became exposed to death and destruction, just as they were doing to our people."

Following the supermarket explosion, Hamdallah said, he successfully committed five more operations in a two-month period in Tel Aviv, Natanya and elsewhere.

Despite his unmistakable dark Arab complexion, Hamdallah apparently always made it past Israeli police and security forces. He says that his interrogators asked him how he penetrated their lines, to which he replied, "It is for us to do and for you to try to find out."

The Israeli occupiers, according to Hamdallah, "must not feel comfortable on our land and the means to [make it] so is through military armed struggle." Hamdallah, maybe understandably so, is very protective of the right of Palestinians to wage armed struggle.

continued on page 10

Palestine and Culture

Eulogy to Prisoner Abu Jamal

by Said al-Ghazali

On Wednesday, November 16, 1983, Ishaq Musa Maraghi (Abu Jamal), 42, a Palestinian prisoner serving 20 years imprisonment, died in Beer Sheba Prison. His colleagues and comrades at the prison said he died because of medical negligence.

Maraghi family members and his friends in Silwan village, Jerusalem district, held a mourning celebration at the Silwan Athletic Club, December 28, attended by more than 500 people. Speakers related Maraghi's political beliefs and his character as a prominent cadre within the ranks of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

His colleagues and comrades in prison, members of all Palestinian organisations, have published a book of comments, speeches and poems about their prisonmate. The book also included some of the written essays, letters and poems written by "Abu Jamal".

The following is a selection of his and other prisoners' writings.

A Telegramme from Abu Jamal, sent during the Nafha Strike, 1980

From the Nafha of liberaters, I wrote my story
in which I prescribe before death my will
Oh our people, in my prison, I will not compromise
despite torture and brutality
I am still very proud, having very strong will
even if my body is destroyed, my will will never be destroyed
I do not care if they deprive me of air
I have more air, it is my cause
I do not care if they deprive me of water
I will never be satisfied, unless I gain my freedom
I live happily with my comrades
despite long nights and narrow cells
Our brothers, if somebody dies in prison
the sword of death will not weaken me
If Rasem is a victim of Nafha
and Ja'afari is in front of him in paradise
I am with them, perhaps we'll all die
nevertheless we will die resurrecting our Arab nation
We will continue the march after our martyrs
and we will gain the victory for our nation

Nafha al-Thawra

Abu Jamal was interviewed by *Nafha al-Thawra* magazine, issued in Nafha jail. His comrades and all PLO members in Nafha prison gave him the honorific title of "The Militant Who Sacrificed Most." Abu Jamal was suffering from lung inflammation and pains in his back. He was beaten during the 1980 Nafha hunger strike because he refused to give up his fast.

The following are excerpts of the interview:

Nafha al-Thawra: **What did you think, Abu Jamal, as you gained the title of "The Militant Who Sacrificed Most?"**

Abu Jamal: In fact, I do not feel any different from any other militant fighter in this steadfast prison. Everybody sacrificed. This was my real feeling as I carried out my duty to the brothers and colleagues in this lair. I am very proud and loyal to them. This lair has offered up much sacrifice and suffering for the sake of freedom's flag – the Palestinian revolution's flag, which must be hoisted in Palestine. I have great feelings of dignity and respect for *Nafha al-Thawra* for its revolutionary mission. It is a torch of freedom and a lighthouse to martyrs during the revolutionary battle in Nafha and all Israeli prisons.

Nafha al-Thawra: **We notice that you wrote many articles about the martyrs. Would you like to explain why?**

Abu Jamal: Martyrdom is the utmost sacrifice a militant can offer to his homeland and principles. It is our duty to keep a memory of the horoism. It is a lesson for us and for the following generations.

* * * * *

After the assassination of Saad Sayel (Abu Walid), PLO chief-of-staff in the Fatah organisation (in 1982), Abu Jamal wrote the following eulogy:

"Saad Sayel not only represented the real will of the Palestinian fighter but also of the Arab and international freedom fighter. This was manifested in the battle called 'The Siege of Beirut.' Sayel represented, in this battle, the meaning of steadfastness and resistance and refused to retreat or surrender to (Israeli) forces.

"The enemy realised that your existence endangered not only Zionist forces but also the reactionaries. The enemies realised that this Palestinian eagle must be killed.

"Abu Walid, you sacrificed most. You are steadfastness. You disappeared, but you left thousands of souls and resisting bodies in the revolution's ranks fighting the enemy with the same strong will and courage you have. A criminal and cowardly hand killed you. It would not face your courage, steadfastness and manliness. The enemies realised that you are the Giap of the Arabs. You planned and won, attacked and defeated, struck and hurt, were steadfast and never surrendered.

"We praise the strong will with which you started your struggle until you died. We will continue the struggle after you."

* * * * *

Ishaq Musa Maraghi was born in 1941 in Silwan to a poor peasant family. He left school early and began his working life as a painter. In 1959, he joined to the Arab Nationalist movement.

In 1964, he travelled to Egypt where he got military training and in 1967 became a member of the PFLP, immediately after its establishment. In April 1969, he was arrested and imprisoned for three years. After his release, he again headed a cell.

In February 1975, he was arrested and sentenced to 20 years. In 1980, Israeli prisons force-fed three prisoners, among them Abu Jamal. Rasem Halaweh and Ali Ja'afari were killed in the attempt. Abu Jamal was an eyewitness to the crime. He later told the story to his lawyer.

Abu Jamal has three daughters, Amal, Amneh, and Asma, and one son, Jamal.

My Little Dove

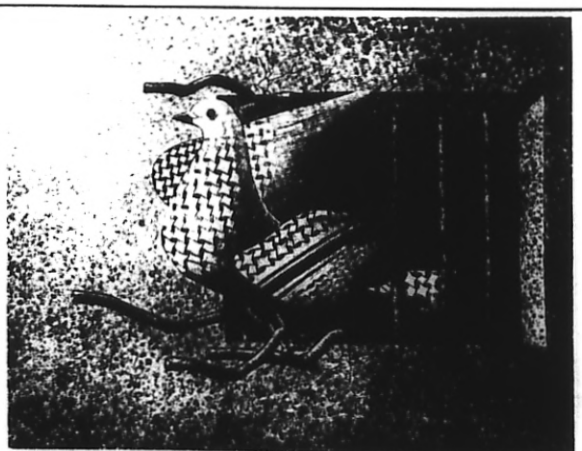
by Ahmad Mohammed al-Daghamin

Write me a letter.
Send me a word by a friend,
Come and visit me in my jail,
Come and see me in my cell.

I will never forget our house,
I still remember its beautiful garden,
Forget not my Dove's warmth, love and kindness.
Forget not the sweet nights we had together.
The enemy of freedom demolished it.
My Dove, be not sad about it.
Be hopeful, optimistic for the day will come,
I will build you a castle, tomorrow, tomorrow,

Love, freedom, pleasure I ask for,
Dark nights, cold, insects are my friends,
On one of the walls, I and a cockroach drew your picture
We will meet again my little Dove.

Ahmad Muhammed al-Daghamin is a student of English at Hebron University.



"Prisoner Day," by Suleiman Mansour.

SABRA AND SHATILA

continued from page 4

people in the West Bank, Gaza and south Lebanon.

Christians and Jews in America, as well as Israelis, all stand equally indicted in the words of Dr Judah Magnes, the first president of the Hebrew University, when he referred to the "Zionist totalitarianism" of his day, which was trying to bring: *"The entire Jewish people under its influence by force and violence. I have not yet seen the dissidents called by their rightful names: Killers — brutalised men and women. All Jews in America... share in the guilt, even those not in accord with the activities of this new pagan leadership but who sit at ease with folded hands... If we raise the alarm, we do so with muffled voices. If our voices be raised, it is because of anxiety for the national discipline, not for anxiety concerning discipline to the spirit of Israel and the timeless values of Israel's tradition."*

At the end of the *Perspective* editorial of October 1982, I asked the question: "What more must it take than the carnage in Beirut for people of conscience everywhere to demand an end to Zionism's unrestrained brutality?" Apparently it takes far more because Jews did not respond in terms of Dr Magnes' that without the fullest adherence to justice, there is nothing at all left to Judaism. The human ethical Judaic concepts have all but been forgotten. Christians and Muslims have also failed on their part.

From Israel, as from officialdom in the US, one had a right to expect very little. And, of course, the media performed in its usual manner. In commentary and editorials, the American media euphorically hailed the findings of Israel's Kahan Commission of inquiry into the Palestinian refugee camp massacres as indicating the greatness of democracy in Israel. The same pundits, however, remained totally and abysmally silent when those indicted by the commission for the manner in which they discharged their duties went relatively scot-free.

Even though he met with the Phalange commander at Phalange headquarters as the massacres were proceeding, chief of staff general Rafael Eitan was allowed to retire as he had planned. General Amos Yaron was only forbidden to serve as field commander for three years, while no action was taken against general Amit Drori.

Prime Minister Begin, himself indicted by the commission for "showing absolutely no interest in the camps... his lack of involvement cast[ing] on him a certain degree of responsibility," refused to do more than shift the chief culprit, defence minister Ariel Sharon, from his post to minister without portfolio in the cabinet and serving on two vital defence committees.

The Israeli journal *HaAretz* editorially proclaimed on the front page: "They are making a mockery of the commission of inquiry's recommendation. The cabinet decision contradicts its claim that it has accepted the commission's recommendations in full and is implementing them in full, including the most important recommendation."

In its editorial, "Defying the Commission," *The Jerusalem Post* wrote: "While the commission used a circumlocution to call for Sharon's resignation, it has every right to expect that its intent would be plain to every right-thinking person."

Sharon remained in the cabinet and *The New York Times* et al remained silent.

And, incidentally, on September 13, 1984 the same Ariel Sharon was designated minister of trade and industry in the new Peres-Shamir unity government. From this post, undoubtedly, he will use his influence, as he did in the past, to foster the establishment of new West Bank settlements far beyond the number of six, upon which the leadership agreed.

Words are quite futile at a second anniversary of a great tragedy such as Sabra and Shatila and the onslaught on Beirut and south Lebanon unless they inspire deeds. I have been reminded of this by the time-honoured words of the great emancipator, President Abraham Lincoln, in his tribute to the civil war dead. I have tried to adopt his phraseology to the occasion on which we are meeting: *"We meet to pay tribute to martyrs of a nation-yet-to-be who perished at the hands of those who insist that all men are not created equal, that they alone should enjoy freedom and the right of self-determination. While we cannot be in Lebanon or in Palestine to dedicate a final resting place for those who have given their lives that a new nation might be born, it is altogether fitting and proper that we meet here in the world's decision-making capitol to declare that neither they nor their aims shall be forgotten."*

In a larger sense, even were we in Lebanon we could not dedicate — we could not consecrate — we could not hallow — the ground where they lie. The brave Palestinians, living and dead, who struggled and are struggling over there have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it should never be allowed to forget what happened to those innocent Palestinians and their Lebanese brethren who perished at Sabra and Shatila or who died in the battle of Beirut and are falling in southern Lebanon. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished cause for which they died — the right of free people — of all people — to govern themselves.

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause to which they were fully devoted and that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain. We all must recognise that some part of the humanity in all of us lies dead, murdered in the camps outside of Lebanon, and that Jews, Christians and Muslims may live in equality in the Holy Land and enjoy the same rights and assume the same duties, free from racial or religious discrimination, and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish in Lebanon, Palestine or anywhere else on earth.

We do not have the time to detail here what we all must do to keep faith with those who have died. One point I should like to make: Palestinian and Arab unity, both in Middle East countries and in the United States, is a *sine qua non* to any successful effort to gain a fair peace and to assure a Palestinian state. Unfortunately, too many of the Arab Americans, including Arab American groups represented here today, seem to be only interested in expanding their own egos rather than in a unified effort to make a real impact on the American public and those leaders who are willing to listen.

Only a unified effort can assure that the world will not forget what happened in the camps in Beirut September 16-18, 1982 and make possible, in the words of Khalil Gibran, that "what we say today with one heart will be said tomorrow by the multitudes."

AHMAD HAMZEH NATSHEH

continued from page 3

A: I don't think that there's a difference [between then and now] because if you take a list of those people who are applauding the new projected initiatives — of King Hussein, of the Reagan plan — they are the same who applauded the initiative of Sadat and most of them went to meet and congratulate Sadat in his hotel in Jerusalem: Freij, Hikmat al-Masri, Shawwa. Those people who were in favour of Camp David are today in favour of Hussein's proposal; those who were opposed then are opposing today.

Q: But do you see a slow movement in that direction? Any erosion in the nationalist coalition?

A: Don't make the confusion that those who supported the convening of the PNC are with Hussein's initiative.

Q: Has there been any strengthening of the pro-Jordanian position or elements in the West Bank in the last several years?

A: I don't think you can consider it a strengthening — you can call it a weakening of the PLO. It is a question of balance. When you are weak, your opponent appears stronger. When the PLO in the occupied territories was very strong and supported by the majority of the people, the Jordanian position was very weak and could not manifest itself to the outside. Now after Beirut, after the split in the PLO — nobody can deny that the PLO is weakened, that it is not as strong as it was before 1982. The latent forces were always there but subdued because of the strength of the PLO.

From the early 1970s the PLO built itself in the occupied territories on the account of Jordanian influence. It gradually replaced Jordanian influence. Now the situation is completely reversed and Jordanian influence is reasserting itself.

Q: What seems to be different is that pro-Jordanian elements are using the slogans of Palestinian nationalism in order to reassert themselves.

A: Many circumstances were used. This *rapprochement* between the Palestinians and the Jordanians played a very big role in helping the Jordanian side improve its positions.

Q: So what does the West Bank and Gaza need to do right now, in terms of national institutions or creating another local leadership front...?

A: I think the West Bank is in need, more than outside, of its national unity, and to avoid reflecting the split outside to the inside. And I think it is possible as long as we are here under the repression of our common enemy, the occupying forces. So the reconstruction of Palestinian national unity is more of a duty and is easier to realise than outside. All parties face the daily problems with the occupying forces and they need each other to face this attitude of the Israelis.

An example is at Bir Zeit, when there were two simultaneous meetings, in favour and against the convening of the PNC. When they were faced by Israeli soldiers they were forced to react together against the Israelis. If we want to live, it is a duty, a necessity, felt by everybody.

Q: If it is felt by everbody, why are there so many attempts to split the national institutions?

A: That is why one of the most important factors is what is going on outside. If they would leave us alone, we could manage much better. They are talking about helping the Palestinians in the occupied territories but I tell you frankly — I don't see it. What they are doing outside does us much harm. I don't think they do it intentionally. But it is very painful to us, for example during the week of the meeting, hearing some speeches and cursing and accusing; it was confusing. They couldn't analyse anything. And Syrian TV was worse. Why? For the benefit of whom? One of the most negative results of what happened is that the gap between Palestinians was increased.

Q: Don't some rightist elements in the occupied territories now feel they can "go it alone"?

A: This is only a small fraction of the people. They represent the big Palestinian bourgeoisie who have interests in the occupied territories, and in Amman or sometimes in Cairo, and see this *rapprochement* with the Palestinians as a guarantee for their interests. But this is a very small category.

Q: The level and style of political discussion in the occupied territories, especially during such a politically crucial episode as the Amman PNC, appeared to be quite low, judging from the local newspapers.

A: Even the journalistic level is becoming very low.

But real political discussion takes place in very small circles, and in larger circles when there is a marriage or condolence, in the barbershops. And this need for national unity is always expressed.

Q: Would it be useful to have another national front or guidance committee?

A: Lately, when somebody started to talk about a national guidance committee, a *Jerusalem Post* writer, the Israelis put some people under town arrest, just because they talked of the idea.

We lack an organisation of local leadership.

Q: How would you assess the health of national institutions in general? They used to be very active, thriving organisations.

A: Used to be. Where are they? These institutions should be worked on, too, because many stopped to be national. You cannot give the quality of "national" to many of these institutions. They used to be effective. Now they spend their time in how to get money. This is one of the negative aspects of the money sent to help people here. It destroyed people and destroyed the institutions because they don't struggle. All what they want is to get money, and to do what... to make nurseries, clinics. I am not against nurseries and clinics but, according to my thinking, these are not aims. They should be used as means to attract, to unite people, to talk to them, to educate, stimulate, excite them! But, unfortunately, these things are becoming as aims in themselves. Some of our women's institutions teach embroidery, sewing. They have a good conscience but when we come to political conscience, it is not existing.

Our other national institutions are influenced as everthing else by the same negative outside factors which are prevalent in the occupied territories. We need a new survey of the situation and find a way to reconvene our national institutions on a national, political level.

Q: And how do you do that?

A: This is the work of the national leadership, how it worked previously. It is up to them. It is a national necessity.

Q: What is the significance of having three people, all deportees, from the occupied territories on the new PLO Executive Committee?

A: Nothing. I do not believe they were chosen for this reason but for their political line. They are accepted by the people who were very enthusiastic about the meeting in Amman and *rapprochement* with Jordan.

OPINION

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

And They Shall Beat Their Plowshares Into Submachine Guns...

by Michael Jackson

The spectacle of Ariel Sharon hugging a Torah scroll to his bloated belly as a ring of ecstatic settlers danced around him was yet one more scene in the sinister farce being played out in the West Bank by Gush Emunim and its right-wing allies. Sharon's performance, staged by the supporters of the underground in the centre of a depopulated Hebron, brought out all the luminaries of Israeli fascism. But it was clear who had top billing when Sharon stepped out into the limelight and, with all the bluster at his command, barked: "Next year in Nablus — *if God wills it.*"

Of course, he was playing to a religious audience, hence the invocation of God's will. And generals, always on the lookout for cannon-fodder, have a knack for inspiring their troops. Whether anyone was taken in by Sharon's new-found piety is really not the point; he was playing his part to the hilt and his audience lapped it up. For them, Sharon is a national hero, a man whom they can count on to persevere in the struggle for a Greater Land of Israel. Moreover, he has shown himself to be immune to the "foreign creeds of the West"; democracy, equal rights, freedom of speech and the like are as alien to Sharon as they are to Gush Emunim.

Marx referred to religion as the opiate of the masses, the means by which they were sedated into accepting their subjugation, but the type of religion that has been in the ascendancy in post-1967 Israel seems to be more like a kind of amphetamine, a theophanic stimulant which induces an extreme form of paranoia, otherwise known as chauvinism. Thus "inspired," the glossy-eyed idealists of Gush Emunim are prepared to forsake the "fleshpots of Tel Aviv" for a rigorous life in the lands they refer to as Judea and Samaria.

To the uninitiated observer, their much-vaunted idealism seems to owe a lot to the more repressive aspects of Orthodox Judaism. By sublimating their sexuality into "love for the Land of Israel," they manage a synthesis whereby colonialism provides them with an outlet for their pent-up libido. In the barbed-wire enclaves that dot the West Bank, with guns grafted to their bodies and God hovering overhead, they seem to have succeeded in easing some of the tension of their inner lives by projecting it onto an external object, namely, the occupied territories.

In retrospect, Israel's 1967 "victory" unlocked a veritable Pandora's Box of religious obscurantism, as Israel's conquests provided the opportunity of allowing religious praxis to cohere with nationalist ideology. Judaism, like all religions, has its share of retrograde beliefs, and given the policies of successive Israeli governments (and successive American administrations), it is not all that surprising that it was precisely these beliefs that came to the fore.

Sharon's crackpot realism — which elevates Israel to superpower status — chimes in well with the mystical nationalism of the settlers. But his constituency is not limited to Gush Emunim; it encompasses everyone who longs for a strongman, a leader capable of lifting the country out of the morass of reality.

The country's soaring rate of inflation (reckoned at 500 [now 1000 —ed] percent) has created a general air of instability. Everyone is a millionaire; everyone is broke. Such situations tend to increase authoritarian longings. Sitting in front of the TV set night after night, inculcated with the idea that the Jewish people is somehow superior to the rest of the world, the poverty of everyday life is diminished by the greatness of the nation. And the nation is only as great as its armed forces — ever hear that one before?

Since 1967 generals have been parachuting out of the army and onto the Knesset rostrum at an alarming rate; a military backround is almost a prerequisite for "dealing with Israel's security needs." Little wonder then that military models reign supreme. Uncle Sam can finance a military solution for every political problem, or so Sharon thought.

As his 48-hour war drags into its third winter, the Labour Party, which only two short years ago called for Sharon's removal from public office, is now in the process of rehabilitating Israel's "Big Daddy." The minister of trade and commerce in Israel's national unity government, Sharon has been given the opportunity to trade in deceit and invest in his future. Hence his appearance in Hebron — under divine auspices.

He may have destroyed the country's agricultural sector during his term as minister of agriculture, catapulated Israel into the quicksand of Lebanon when he served as minister of defence, but Sharon has kept faith with the messianic vision of Gush Emunim (and thus insured their eternal support): For they shall beat their ploughshares into submachine guns and their pruning hooks into cluster bombs, for out of Zion shall go forth the law of annexation.

A Devaluation of Language

by Agnes McSharry *

"We didn't take any land. We took rocks and stones and hillsides that hadn't been touched for hundreds of years." — Ariel Sharon on the occasion of a visit by Alexander Haig, quoted in *The Jerusalem Post* January 1982.

Words in themselves are morally indifferent. Their value in actual usage is determined not by any intrinsic benign or evil character of the words themselves but by the use to which the speaker puts them. Israel Shahak may have been right when he said that the need for hypocrisy on the part of the Israeli government is past but the lies, equivocations and assorted sophistries have so accumulated that it will take time to clear them away.

Fortunately many of the old lies have already been painstakingly exposed honestly and directly by authors writing in English or translated into English, so that the excuse of ignorance on the part of English readers like myself is also past. When American tourists are told a false history of Jerusalem and do not recognise it as false it is not because no valid history has been available to them but because the American public has been strangely satisfied with media propaganda concerning Israel, Zionism and Palestine, as we had to learn painfully not to be concerning Vietnam and as we are learning not to be about El Salvador. It should be matter for suspicion that the three situations have in common, for all their differences, the assault on a peasant culture (presumed inferior) by a high technology culture (presumed superior). Why can we now recognise one instance as imperialist overkill while we still call another progress?

The devaluation of the coin of language in this society is illustrated in the quotation from Ariel Sharon above, whose very title involves deception: he is called "defence minister" and his duties consist of confiscating the land of Beduin who are then put in reservations with superior plumbing in the name of progress; he is in charge of setting up paramilitary settlements at strategic locations throughout the West Bank on land which is simply confiscated for "security" reasons, a process which normal use of language calls theft and which requires that the so-called "settlers" be armed to defend their stolen land against the natural protest of the rightful owners and which further requires that the rightful owners be labelled "terrorist" when they do protest, whether armed or unarmed, and whether they are five years old or fifteen.

Socrates would have been contemptuous had any Athenian dared in his presence to make the kind of sophistical self-contradiction as that given space in *The Jerusalem Post* as the utterance of Sharon: as though you can take rocks and stones and hillsides and not take land. And as though it would make any difference whether the land you took had or had not been touched for hundreds of years or millions of years. If you didn't take rocks or stones and hillsides, why do you have to justify yourself by saying they hadn't been touched? And in saying they hadn't been touched, you open yourself to an equally grave charge of having not the faintest idea of what land is for or how it has been cared for lovingly for hundreds of years.

Anyone with the slightest horticultural or agricultural experience will tell you, if they have spent any time in the actual countryside of Palestine not already destroyed by bulldozers and sealed off by barbed wire, that this land has been lovingly tended for hundreds of years with the most astonishing and meticulous care. Olive trees literally thousands of years old, pruned with incredible finesse, grape vines likewise carefully grafted and pruned. Where the topsoil justified it, hillsides have been terraced over generations to resist erosion from wind and rain and to conserve moisture. Where hillsides were in fact not touched but used only for grazing it was for the same reasons American Indians used some soil for agriculture and other only for herds: and when this same land in America was put under the deep plow, the Dust Bowl resulted. Growing up in Nebraska I heard stories of my Irish grandmother lamenting the hacking down of the roosting places of the Banshee when her sons cleared native shrubs from the gullies and creeks. An Irish peasant, she knew about the spirit of the land and the need for delicacy in the human approach to a marginal ecology. Sharon's callous and deliberate lies expose his failure to understand the first thing about the land and reflects the failure of the Zionist state to recognise not only the rightful ownership but the purpose to which the rightful owners have put the land for centuries. "Defence" means that having stolen land, they must steal more to feel secure.

Part of my title, "Ersatz Israel," is a play on the supposedly biblical justification for the theft of the land. "Eretz Israel" appeals to romantics like Lloyd

continued on next page

Lausanne Palestine Conference: The Dawaymeh Massacre

by the Arab Refugee Congress Delegation

Little is known about the brutal massacre of Arab peasants in the village of Dawaymeh, on October 28, 1948. Dawaymeh is situated a few kilometres west of Hebron. It had a population of six thousand people. Some four thousand Arab refugees had taken refuge in the village prior to the massacre. The reason why so little is known about this massacre, which, in many respects, was more brutal than the Deir Yassin massacre, is because the Arab Legion (the Army in control of that area) feared that if the news was allowed to spread, it would have the same effect on the morale of the peasantry that Deir Yassin had, namely to cause another flow of Arab refugees.

For the benefit, therefore, of the Arab delegations assembled here in Lausanne, a brief account of the massacre is presented here. This account is taken out of a swom statement given by Hassan Mahmoud Ihdeib, the *mukhtar* of Dawaymeh village. I have personally interviewed the *mukhtar* and found him to be a reasonable quiet man, not given to exaggeration.

He reports that half an hour after the midday prayer on Friday, October 28, 1948, he heard the sound of shooting from the western side of the village. On investigating, he observed a troop of some twenty armoured cars approaching the village on the Qubeiba—Dawaymeh road, a second troop approaching along the Beit Jibrin—Dawaymeh road and other armoured vehicles aproaching from the direction of Nafkhar—Dawaymeh. The village had only twenty guards. They were posted on the western side of the village.

When the armoured cars were within half a kilometre from the village, they opened fire from automatic weapons and mortars and advanced on the village with automatic weapons blazing. Jewish troops jumped out of the armoured cars and spread out through the streets of the village firing promiscuously at anything they saw. The villagers began to flee the village while the older ones took shelter in the mosque and others in a nearby cave called Iraq al-Zagh. The shooting continued for about an hour.

The following day, the *mukhtar* met with the villagers and agreed to return to the village that night to find out the fate of those that had stayed behind. He reports that in the mosque there were the bodies of some sixty persons, most of whom were men of advanced age who had taken shelter in the mosque. His father was among them. He saw a large number of bodies in the streets: bodies of men, women and children. He then went to the cave of Iraq al-Zagh. He found at the mouth of the cave the bodies of eighty-five persons, again men, women and children.

The *mukhtar* then carried out a census of the inhabitants of the village and found that a total of 455 persons were missing, of whom 280 were men and the rest women and children.

There were other casualties among the refugees, the number of which the *mukhtar* was unable to determine.

The *mukhtar* explicity states that the village had not been called upon to surrender and that the Jewish troops had not met with any resistance.

It need hardly be mentioned that the brutal and unprovoked attack occurred during the truce.

Secretary

Arab Refugee Congress Delegation

Bus Bombing in Context

by Ali Ahmad

The bomb explosion which led to the death and injury of Israelis riding in a West Jerusalem bus, tragic as it was, cannot be separated from the continued repression, provocation and economic situation to which the Palestinians are subject. Neither can it be seen apart from the military aggression to which Arabs are subjected by the American-Israeli policies regionally.

In the past few weeks the Israeli authorities' repression took the official form of the plans to liquidate Palestinian refugee camps through curfews and rehabilitation plans. Collective punishment and harassments are commonplace.

Permitting settlers to take the law into their own hands was officially sanctioned by Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens and his military government in their "chase stone throwers" directive.

Settler provocations continued unchecked. Palestinians in the Old City of Jerusalem continued to suffer physical and emotional harassment from the "illegally" built Birkat Avraham religious school. In Nablus, despite "military orders," the power-hungry settlers continued to squat in the illegally-seized Joseph's Tomb and quarters while perpetrators of violent crimes against Arabs were not apprehended.

Economically, Palestinians living in the occupied territories are the most to suffer as the result of Israel's war economy.

Bomb disposal robot: *Provocation invites response.*

Palestinian farmers are forced to leave their vegetables unpicked because of the ban on imports to Israel proper.

Employees' and worker's take-home salaries are buying less and less. Labourers and employees of Israeli establishments are the first to be fired as Israeli unemployment rises.

The tragic explosion in Jerusalem shows beyond doubt the urgent need for Israel to recognise Palestinian national rights as the basis for the end to the conflict.

Otherwise the idea of continued aggression or further escalation in building settlements will, as *The Jerusalem Post* wrote December 7, be "counterproductive."

Drobless' Arab Building 'Cancer'

by Marcel Roubicek

To the Editor:

During one of his recent talks about the supposed necessity of building Jewish-inhabited suburbs all around Jerusalem, Matityahu Drobless, the Herut Party representative on the Jewish Agency Directorate, stated that this is to be done in order to stem the 'cancer' of a supposed Arab building spree in the region. According to the term he used, an uninformed reader of the daily press might suppose that the Arab builders in question constitute such a danger and calamity in all respects that everything possible should be done in order to avoid an impending major catastrophe embodied in those newly-constructed quarters.

As things are, no such catastrophe will ever materialise, for in order to build a house an average Arab, or other, builder does not only have to overcome time-consuming and nerve-wracking hurdles presented by Kollek's municipality to anybody impudent enough to contemplate doing such a thing but also has to possess a sizeable amount of strong foreign currency (Israeli currency, for obvious reasons, won't do), that is, has to be a more than an average, well-to-do person. Such people rarely, if ever, present any security risk. On the contrary, it is they who frequently fall victim to all kinds of criminals who prefer to prey upon them.

It seems that Drobless' vision is somewhat misdirected, for had he taken the time necessary to look for real trouble spots in Jerusalem, he would undoubtedly soon discover some. Thus, for instance, the onetime luxurious Baka'a quarter presently houses criminals of every description who publicly shoot each other in front of passers-by in order to eliminate rivals in the drug trade, not to speak of lesser fry like burglars or prostitutes (plus their pimps), or the ill-conceived (probably by him) Neve Ya'acov settlement project teeming with the so-called Rasputniks who, if not actually engaged in some other kind of wrongdoing, spend their time getting dead drunk or, alternately, beating their womenfolk in order to extract funds necessary for the purpose. Maybe the eloquent Drobless might oblige us with finding proper medical terms for those activities, too.

Marcel Roubicek
Jerusalem

Jaffa's Jewish-Arab Committee

by the Jewish-Arab Committee for the Arabs of Jaffa

To the Editor:

As Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel, residents of Tel Aviv-Jaffa and members of the Jewish-Arab Committee for the Arabs of Jaffa, we are greatly disturbed by the recent statements by Jewish groups from Jaffa and Nazareth Elite calling to prevent mixed residential neighbourhoods.

Remarks such as: "The Arabs need to be removed from here" and "dirty Arabs"(*Yediot Aharanot*, December 18, 1983) reflect the intensity of the hatred, suspicion and fear that will escalate the violence between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel.

These statements arouse a deep anxiety. The racism implicit in such remarks is counter to the words of the Declaration of Independence which states: "The state of Israel will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants....[It] will uphold full social and political equality of its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex."

Israeli Arabs are entitled as citizens to full equal rights. Discrimination against a minority in our country shakes the foundation of our democracy.

We call for tolerance, mutual respect and protection of the civil rights of all citizens within the state of Israel. In both Nazareth and Jaffa the Arab residents have not been provided with ample housing stock to accommodate the natural growth of their population.

The Jewish-Arab Committee, as a non-party affiliated group, works towards these goals in the areas of education, housing and improvement of the quality of life in Jaffa.

The Jewish-Arab Committee for the Arabs of Jaffa
Co-chairpersons: Bracha Yanuv
Nahle Shakar

Devaluation of Language

continued from page 8

George who went to crucial conferences deciding how much of the Middle East was to be given to the Zionists by England with an old archaeological map on which Dan (of the motto "from Dan to Beer Sheba") was not even shown. Ersatz means substitute, fake, swindle, not the real thing. The swindle has been discovered by scores of would-be Israelites who are leaving, disillusioned by what they have seen.

The rest of my title, "Language as Bullshit," is intended to take the discussion outside the politeness of the academic forum and to place it instead in the invective of anger, the language of the street and the reality of the barnyard.

* *Agnes McSharry is a pseudonym for a former lecturer at Bir Zeit University.*

Who Protects Al-Aqsa?

Israeli extremist attacks on the al-Aqsa compound in Jerusalem's Old City, including bombing and shooting of worshippers, have reached the staggering figure of 150 per year. The *waqf*, which administers Islam's third holiest site, bears most of the burden for protecting it, with only 40 unarmed guards on duty round-the-clock. Awad Abdel Fattah explored why their job is made more difficult.

Shortly after the Israeli takeover of the West Bank in 1967, a number of Jewish extremist groups openly declared their intention to break into the al-Aqsa compound, destroy the mosque and the golden Dome of the Rock and build the Third Jewish Temple on the site. Some Israeli extremists forced their way into al-Aqsa compound in a provacative way on the pretext of organising prayers. Two years later, the threats of destruction almost became real when a saboteur set al-Aqsa Mosque on fire causing a great deal of damage to several major parts. Time has shown this political arson to have marked only the beginning of serious Israeli attempts to destroy the Muslim holy site and control the compound, which occupies almost one-fourth of Jerusalem's walled city. According to Abu Imad, the head of the *waqf* guards, close to 150 attempts were made to break into al-Aqsa in the last year alone.

The Israelis, who are supposed to safeguard the holy places under their control, have done very little to protect the Muslim sites of al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock. The place itself is referred to by Israeli government and media only in connection with Jewish history — the Temple Mount — and not by the names of the buildings which Muslims consider their third holiest site. Some Israeli officials even gave implicit support to the extreme Jewish groups who have been trying to revitalise Jewish history by obliterating the history of other peoples.

Against this background, it is understandable that the task of protecting al-Aqsa compound has become risky and difficult. After the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, protection of the holy places — left to the Israeli occupation authorities — became separated from their day-to-day administration. The supreme Islamic council, consisting of the Islamic *waqf* administration and board, undertook the administration. The separation of these two responsibilities was initiated by the Islamic council to counter any attempts by the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs from taking over the holy places completely, as it did with *waqf* property inside the 1948 borders of Israel. Ekrima Sabri, a member of the Islamic council, also explained that the council cannot pretend it has the capability to protect the holy places. "We did not and still do not have the effective means and equipment to protect al-Aqsa from outside." He added that this is the responsibility of the occupying power, not of the occupied people.

Waqf Guards Increased

The increasing number of provocations and attacks by extreme Jewish groups has compelled the *waqf* to add guards over the years, increasing the staff from 30 before the occupation to the present 120. The four mobile units of *waqf* guards are stationed within the compound and at each of the nine gates, a guard keeps watch beside an Israeli policeman.

Twenty-four guards are employed inside al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, in two shifts, 24 hours a day. Guards must be in good health, well-mannered, medium aged, residing close to Jerusalem and committed to the guard program. Each guard is part of a mobile unit and works an eight-hour day or night shift per day.

The *waqf* guards constantly patrol inside the large mosque compound and are instructed always to be alert. They act as an independent force separate from the Israelis. Before 1967 their job was confined to keeping order inside the compound and dealing with minor problems Muslim worshippers might face. But today their main responsibility is to prevent any attempt by Israeli extremist individuals or groups to break into the compound.

But the *waqf* guards' physical ability to defend such a vulnerable place is limited. The force is not allowed to carry weapons and is not authorised to station guards outside the compound. They are not a trained military force nor are they permitted to use sophisticated warning devices which could be installed on the high walls overlooking the compound to prevent sabotage. As unarmed guards they must depend mainly on their alertness and limited physical power to stop attacks once they have been launched.

With no effective or even serious guard work from outside and from the air more attacks could easily be perpetrated in the future. Members of the Jewish underground organisation who were tried recently for attempting to blow up al-Aqsa last February had considered attacking the mosque by helicopter. It was only their fear that the Temple wall might also be damaged that prevented them from carrying out such a brazen plot. But if they had gone ahead, al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock would be rubble today, no doubt setting in motion grave consequences indeed.

The wall surrounding the *Haram al-Sharif* compound, approximately two-kilometres in length, is practically indefensible. The Jewish terrorists proved that the high walls can be easily scaled, removing the main obstacle to attacks on the two Muslim holy places from within. Under the cover of rain, wind and darkness, the terror cell used specially constructed ladders to climb up the walls with huge quantities of high explosives which they intended to place inside the mosque. In fact they could have simply used rocket launchers from that height to cause terrible damage, but they had more ambitious aims. They apparently wanted to raze the two places to the ground. It was the vigilant *waqf* guards who noticed the saboteurs and frightened them away by their presence — and not the Israelis.

But the *waqf* guards are only too aware that they will not be able to foil every attempt on al-Aqsa although they maintain the highest state of alert. Abu Imad, the head guard, explained, "Those who have made the attempts are militarily well-trained and have tried a variety of tactics to reach the place."

Worshippers Play Important Role

The supreme Islamic Council does not have to depend only on the *waqf* guards or on the Israeli police to thwart attacks against al-Aqsa. It has a virtual army at its disposal. Many of the break-in attempts made in the past by extreme Jewish groups were aborted by the worshippers themselves. When the council learns that an extremist group will forcefully enter al-Aqsa, a call is made over the mosque's loudspeakers to all worshippers to gather in the compound as soon as possible "to defend the holy places." Those who hear the call first convey the message to others in and outside the city. It is an ancient tradition of defence. Motivated by religious sentiments, they rush to the designated area armed with clubs, stones and knives.

In February 1979, when Jewish Defence League head, now Kach leader and MK Rabbi Meir Kahane announced his intention to enter al-Aqsa compound with his followers for 'prayers,' over 25,000 people responded to the call of the Islamic council within fifteen minutes, according to Sheikh Jamil, the secretary to the al-Aqsa director. By the time others arrived at the compound from different parts of the West Bank, the number of defenders was more than 50,000. Such mass turnouts have so far persuaded the Israeli authorities to prevent extremist Jewish groups from proceeding with their plans: to avoid a bloody confrontation and the predictable public and international uproar that would ensue.

No Trust In The Israelis

Israeli policemen and border guards were stationed inside the compound after Goodman's attack but their relationship with the *waqf* guards is strictly one between occupier and occupied. The Israeli forces consider the *waqf* guards inferiors who should be subordinated to the Israeli force. "The Israelis," said Abu Imad, "want to prove their real control over the place." He added, "We believe that the compound should be under our control because it is a holy place and it has nothing to do with politics, and it has always been this way."

The *waqf* guards do not trust the Israeli policemen and the border guards. They believe that the Israeli guards are biased and that they do not carry out their job honestly.

At the gates where both a policeman and a *waqf* guard are stationed, the policemen are supposed to search the belongings of those who enter the compound and check the IDs of foreign tourists and Israelis. But the *waqf* guards have been complaining that the police and border guards instead check the IDs of the Palestinians who come to worship and ignore many Israelis and tourists.

The *waqf* board and administration have asked that border guards who were placed inside the compound after Goodman's attack be stationed outside on the streets leading to al-Aqsa compound where they can be of use. Islamic *waqf* circles have also expressed worries about the increase in the number of border guards. According to Sheikh Jamil, there are now 70 policemen — there were far fewer before — and most of the Arab policemen have been replaced by Israelis without any reason being given. This change is interpreted by the *waqf* circles as a step to tighten the Israeli hold over al-Aqsa and, as Ekrima Sabri believes, "finally handing it over to the extreme Jewish groups." As long as the Israeli occupation continues, al-Aqsa mosque, the shrine of Dome of the Rock and all Muslim believers the world over who respect these places as sacred to their religion, will be insecure.

One Prisoner's Life

continued from page 5

Basically, he said, "because our enemy will not surrender an inch of our territory unless they are made to do so by armed struggle." The Palestinians, he said, should not focus on only one element of struggle. Yet, he said, "the absolute core of struggle is armed struggle and all else is supportive."

The Arrest

Each Palestinian entering the ranks of the revolution, Hamdallah said, "knows that he will either become a martyr or a prisoner." The point, he continued, is to do as much as he can for the longest possible period.

Hamdallah was first arrested in February 1973 and then released for lack of evidence. Then, due to an error, "Israeli forces captured some documents when they attacked Palestinian centres at Verdan in Beirut. These documents," he said, "had real names in them. They were sent from Damascus to Beirut." The documents were the basis upon which the Israelis interrogated him and later found him guilty, sentencing him to six terms of life imprisonment, one life term for each operation he committed. Fortunately, he continued "Israeli forces didn't capture the rest of my cell and some continued their activities."

Hamdallah's voice quivered as he spoke about his arrest, the pain visible on his face. "It was during the day," he said. "They came in armoured cars while I was studying. They handcuffed me and then they showed me the documents they had brought with them from Beirut with my real name on them and letterheads reading 'The Palestine Liberation Organisation.' "

About his release from the Israeli prisons, Hamdallah said that he knew, as do all other Palestinian prisoners, that the revolution will do its best to free them. Many Palestinian fighters, he continued, lost their lives while trying to free others from Israeli prisons. He then detailed the operation through which four Palestinian fighters captured eight Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, "a clear signal to us," he said, "that some would be freed soon."

"Only five minutes before we left Beer Sheba prison, we were told, 14 of us, that we were leaving. This was a Palestinian wedding," he said, although sadly he admitted "many of our brothers and sisters remain there." They will also become free, he added.

"My plan for the future," he concluded, "is to rejoin the ranks. It is a commitment which will not be reversed."

Weak Police Force No Match for Lawless Israeli Settlers

Local police in the West Bank are little more than office boys for disinterested Israeli supervisors, giving settler terrorism a free hand, as Daoud Kuttab describes in the following report.

With the issue of settler vigilantism, the rule of law in the occupied territories has come under close scrutiny in the last several years. On February 25, 1982 the Israeli government appointed a commission to investigate political crime by settlers and soldiers in the West Bank and the lack of progress in investigating the cases. The report of the inquiry team, headed by deputy Israeli attorney general Yehudit Karp, was suppressed for one year but finally made public in February 1984: it unleashed a lashing criticism of the Israeli and local police and military justice departments.

The inquiry teams report, which became known as the Karp report, outlined a number of existing problems in the West Bank's law enforcement. The list of unsolved cases was shocking. The Karp report pointed to "malfunctions" in the organisational structure of the various bodies in charge of investigating and noted that, "The problem of cooperation between the police and military police requires reorganisation."

According to the report, out of 70 incidents occuring in 1981 and 1982 which Karp commission examined, only 15 led to a recommendation for prosecution, and 53 reached a dead end. Of the 33 unsolved cases about half were closed on grounds of offenders unknown, five for lack of evidence, seven because no charges were brought and three for lack of public interest.

Complaints

Police inaction, because no complaints were filed in certain incidents, was highly criticised by the Karp report. In many cases involving settler or soldier actions, West Bank Palestinians are reluctant to file complaints. On one hand, they have little faith in Israeli authorities investigating a case against fellow Jewish settlers or soldiers and, on the other hand, Palestinians fear revenge by settlers. Another danger existed from the Israeli-armed village leagues. Village league members were reported to have erected checkposts in the Hebron village of Sa'ir, attacked the Beit Sahour Orthodox Club and Bethlehem University guards causing injuries and property damage. Residents were terrorised by the gun toting leaguers who operated as an adjunct of the military government.

In response to these problems the Karp report explained the attitudes residents held about filing complaints with the local police and reiterated what the Israeli High Court had declared in regards to settlers' actions in Hebron's Beit Hadassah: "There is no doubt that the main function of the ruler is to maintain law and order. It must do so in the absence of any complaints from the local residents."

Politics

The most striking point brought out in the Karp report was the number of cases in which politicians interfered. The report pointed to cases where the top echelons of the Israeli government, including members of Knesset and ministers, interfered with police work on behalf of settlers detained for anti-Arab acts. A number of files against Israeli settlers were closed on instruction by the politicians. On one occasion a memo was issued by the Kiryat Arba local council urging settlers not to cooperae with the police regarding their investigation of the arson of Hebron market after the murder of a settler.

Political bias by the police can easily be seen by observing any West Bank police department. Complaints against Palestinians by settlers are given top priority and are scrupulously investigated, while similar complaints by Palestinians against other Palestinians or settlers are simply ignored or delayed.

Vigilante action by settlers is rarely investigated. On many occasions the settlers accompany the police and army and carry out their own investigations and searches. At one time during the demonstrations in the Ramallah area against the civil administration in 1982 a settler was seen on television shooting at demonstrators along with the army. No mention was ever made of this settler being questioned or prosecuted.

In April 1980 a group of settlers from Gush Emunim's Ofra terrorized Ramallah by driving through the town, at night, shooting in the air and smashing the windows of more than 120 cars and 70 homes. Similar incidents occured in Halhoul, Ain Yabroud and the Jalazoun refugee camp. According to a report in *The Jerusalem Post* April 25, 1980, the authorities reacted mildly to these actions and no arrests were made. This is in contrast to their immediate reactions to any disurbances by Palestinians. According to a 1983 update of military order 1108, Palestinians caught throwing stones at Israeli targets can get up to 20 years in prison.

West Bank lawyers Raja Shehadeh and Jonathan Kuttab wrote in their book *The West Bank and the Rule of Law* that the "political context of the conflict between the settlers and population" means the settlers "can depend on the authorities for protection in such situations." The attorneys reported that "not only are the West Bankers unable to count on the Israelis for police protection from such attacks, but the settlers themselves often act as if they were the proper authorities and assume functions of the military government." The Palestinian lawyers noted incidents near the Dheisheh refugee camp and in Hebron where Jewish settlers from Kiryat Arba arrested Palestinian youths and detained them at Kiryat Arba to interrogate, beat and otherwise abuse them before turning them over to the police.

Last June a fight broke out at a Beit Jala boarding school. The fight involved students and local residents and resulted in physical injury and property damage. The commotion brought the local police to the scene but the Arab policemen who came stood by passively as the fight continued to rage. When pressed by concerned residents to act the policemen made an attempt to separate the raging youths, but stopped after a 17-year-old youth grabbed a policeman by his uniform and pushed him aside. The policemen returned to their parked jeep and placed a call to the Israeli border patrol. They then sat smoking cigarettes until the patrol came. The Israelis walked right up to the fight area, arrested the fighting youths and handed them over to the Bethlehem police headquarters.

Jerusalem policeman fires tear gas over Old City walls to disperse youths throwing stones from inside at passers-by: *Complaints against Palestinians by settlers are scrupulously investigated but complaints by Palestinians are ignored or delayed.*

The above incident, a typical one in West Bank towns and villages, is a clear sign of the ever deteriorating status of the local police, their lack of credibility and respect in the Palestinian community and their resulting inability to enforce civil law and protect residents.

Part of the problem is duplicity of command: since the Israeli occupation, the Israeli army's border patrol personnel have been made responsible for suppressing any Palestinian politically-related protest. Although the incident above was not politically related, the local police in the West Bank often call in the border patrol when their own enforcement is in jeopardy. The local police force has responsibilities for all non-political law enforcement activities and has been fully integrated into the Israeli police department. Although the Israeli military commander of the West Bank and his deputies in the seven West Bank districts have legal power over the police force under Israeli military law, the direct chain of command is channeled through the Israeli police hierarchy.

Qualifications

The general level of police education and training for West Bank policemen is very low. According to the qualifying requirements, an eight grade education is sufficient for enrollment. When accepted new recruits are given a one month training course after which they are assigned office or street duties. The lack of basic education or police training not only results in a weak and ineffective police force but causes problems between the police and local public.

West Bank dignitaries and mayors have had to interfere with police officials a number of times regarding the attitudes and behaviour of young policemen (there are no policewomen in the West Bank). The majority of the complaints surround the overzealous behaviour of police or obnoxious attitudes, mainly of traffic and ordinance control cops. Jericho and Ramallah residents have been making the most complaints about police behaviour. During the winter months when Jericho is flooded with visitors and vacationers the traffic police go on stringent campaigns, giving fines to owners of a vehicle with the least violation. Not having a first aid kit or a reflector *triangle is reason for a ticket. Residents* complain that vacationers often find themselves with several fines after having spent just one Sunday afternoon in Jericho.

Although the overzealous policemen have succeeded in maintaining a low accident rate in the Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem areas, partly due to the small number of vehicles on the roads and the compact streets resulting in the impossibility of driving fast, the problems that continue to exist in other police-related areas have continued to be left on the back burner.

Law Enforcement

In general, law enforcement in the occupied territories has reached an all-time low. The number of unsolved crimes is very high and residents complain of not feeling safe and secure. During 1983 at least three major robberies in East Jerusalem involving thousands of Jordanian dinars were not solved. A theft which occurred in midday on Ramallah's main street became the joke of the town as residents watched local police unsuccessfully chase the robbers through the streets without using their pistols. The weakness of the police is further highlighted when residents compare the situation with pre-occupation days. "During Jordanian rule, no crime, however small, remained unsolved," was how a Jerusalem resident remembered the efficient Jordanian police.

The weakness of the police is not only measured in the number of unsolved crimes but also in the fact that residents display no trust in the police. They look for alternate means of solving their problems. One Ramallah lawyer relates

continued on page 12

Police No Match

continued from page 11

how when his client went to check about a robbery investigation the policeman told him: "Find the thieves and bring them here." The result of police inaction is that residents arm themselves with sticks and pocketknives and when in trouble turn to the tribal system of solving problems whereby community leaders negotiate a system of compensation and reconciliation.

The situation is so bad that, according to a local newspaper, an Israeli security firm is negotiating with the authorities to establish an office in Ramallah in order to guard local offices and businesses. Several wealthy businessmen and personalities hire 24-hour guards to give them protection.

In addition to the weakness of the police shown in the Karp report, Israeli newspapers are also attacking the performance of the police in the occupied territories. *The Jerusalem Post* editorial September 25 said that the police's "greatest failures have been in those areas where they have been required to impose the rule of law and order unacceptable to influential political sectors, whether economic, religious or political."

One of the police failures related to the political sector has been their inability to curb the vigilantism of the village league members. The leaguers in the past have carried out revenge acts against their political opponents with the police standing idly by. One incident took place in Beir Sahour with residents and village league thugs fighting it out while the police stood by doing nothing.

Salaries

One of the major complaints of local police personnel is the low level of salaries. One policeman in Ramallah told *Al Fajr* that his monthly salary doesn't reach IS100,000 (approximately US$300) despite the fact that he has seven children and has been working for over five years. He said that he knows of colleagues that have been working since the occupation and have not passed the IS100,000 point. The policeman, who asked not to be identified, said that Jewish policemen with the same rank receive a higher salary. He said that one of his Jewish colleagues receives 30 percent more per month.

A more impeding problem is the general deficiency in police personnel throughout the districts. At present there are 350 policemen working in the south of the West Bank for a population of nearly a half million. The West Bank is divided into two major districts: the north, whose headquarters is Nablus, and the south, whose headquarters is Bethlehem. The number of policemen for the occupied territories is thus very small if compared with the 1000 policemen working in Jerusalem alone. When contacted through an Israeli journalist, the Bethlehem district commander said the number of policemen is sufficient. He said the ratio of the number of residents to the number of police is the same as that in Israel proper. The Israeli police, however, do not have the added duties of hand-delivering court summons to residents which plagues West Bank police. The police commander further noted that many of the problems that occur, especially in villages, are handled through the traditional customs of *sulha* (reconciliation) and *atweh* (agreement not to take revenge on the offending party).

A major deficiency in the police force is their lack of vehicles. In the Hebron area there are only three police jeeps and, in the Ramallah district, which includes over 105 surrounding villages, only two jeeps are available to the police force.

Public Support

The local police force has a large problem to overcome if it wants public support. The Palestinian population holds a very negative attitude towards the police. To most Palestinians, merely joining the police force is an act of collaboration with the Israeli authorities. Despite the fact that policemen do not interfere with demonstrations or acts of protest against the occupation, they are still looked on negatively by members of the society. As a result the police department as a whole receives neither the approval nor cooperation of the public.

To most people the police force is a necessary evil, to whom they turn only when absolutely necessary. The negative attitude of the general public also reduces the number and quality of recruits. The only people applying to the police force are naturally those with little regard for common consensus. They, in turn, often show disrespect to the public and their officers whom they may not be disciplined enough to follow. These people may also be more susceptible to bribes and pressure to drop a case exerted by friends and relatives.

Policemen try to conceal this arrest from the photographer with their bodies: *"Law enforcement in the occupied territories has reached an all-time low."*

Discrimination

Discrimination in the force against Arab policemen and their job assignments is a problem affecting morale. Every police station in the West Bank is headed by an Israeli Jew. Arab policemen are usually assigned the non-intelligence, routine work of the force. They are given the tasks of traffic control and summons delivery.

In regards to investigation of crimes or complaints the questioning is done on a political basis. According to police investigators, when a complaint is issued involving an Israeli, whether settler or soldier, the Israeli investigator handles the case. This could be an Arab complaint against a Jew or vica versa. If the case is between Arabs, however, the case is left for an Arab investigator. Cases regarding questions of land are always handled by the Jewish investigators.

In most police stations, Arab and Jewish investigators are even physically separated. The Arab investigators are stationed on the first floor and the Israelis on the second. Any case involving an Israeli is automatically sent upstairs, with all others remaining on the first floor.

Courts

Since the police are normally the executive arm of the judicial system, they naturally play an important role in the work (or lack of it) regarding the enforcement of court edicts concerning the West Bank. Several West Bank lawyers interviewed complain that the police are simply not carrying out their duties regarding the summonsing of either individuals with complaints against them, court-subpeonaed witnesses or, most importantly, individuals with warrants out for their arrest. Lawyers say they have often seen criminals a judge has sentenced to prison terms walking freely in the streets.

In most police stations, Arab and Jewish investigators are even physically separated. The Arab investigators are stationed on the first floor and the Israelis on the second.

Muna Rishmawi, a Ramallah attorney, wrote in a recent column published in *Al Fajr* daily August 11 that "the police are told to summons an individual and they do nothing. They are asked to bring witnesses, to investigate a certain crime and they do nothing... What is strange is that nowadays the police ask the lawyers to deliver a summons issued against a client."

Rishmawi's complaints are echoed by other lawyers. The newly-formed Arab Lawyers' Association is preparing a legal study regarding the West Bank police. Former West Bank judge and inspector Nihad Jarallah says that the police are simply unable to handle the amount of work passed to them by the courts. He said that in the Ramallah area there are only two policemen assigned to handle court-related work. Jarallah also said that two jeeps are simply not enough for the regular police work, much less the court-related work, "especially when one of the jeeps is out of order or being used by an Israeli commander for private work." Jarallah, who said that he quit the force because of the unbearable judicial situation, said that he has often sent notes to the police commanders about the situation but "nothing ever gets done to solve the problems." Jarallah said not enough lawyers complain about the miserable situation and revealed that the court-assigned police are often bribed or pressured not to carry out orders against criminals. "I have often seen criminals whom I sentenced to six months in jail on the streets four months after I sentenced them," he said. Jarallah noted that the situation has gotten worse since he left because the Israeli authorities have not yet appointed a court supervisor whose job is to make sure court orders are carried out.

Settlers and Land

Despite some claims that the problems with enforcement of crimes involving Palestinians and Israelis, as discussed in the Karp report, has improved somewhat, the problem of police inaction in land disputes remains. In many land-grabbing cases, Israeli settlers or Jewish 'development' companies move into a strip of Arab-owned land and begin work. This Israeli infringement, usually justified by dubious and questionable land ownership documents, often involves the bulldozing of Arab orchards for the use of Israeli settlement expansion or private Jewish homes. When the Arab landowners interfere to stop the trespassers, violence often erupts. Also when the Palestinian landowners go to court requesting court interference, the settlers often disregard a court order to stop work. Then, when the landowners take the court order to the local police, they often find the police unwilling or unable to interfere in stopping the illegal settler action.

In one case in Bidya, near Tulkarm, landowners went to the Israeli High Court four consecutive times. Each time the court issued an injunction stopping settler work on the land, and each time the settlers ignored the order. In the last session, the High Court judges reprimanded the Israeli prosecutor for his inability to enforce the decision. Despite this fourth court order, the landowners complained that the settlers are still bulldozing the land whenever the police are not around. The police come once a day at specific times, allowing the settlers to simply schedule work during other hours.

Cases like that of the Bidya landowners often take place in many parts of the West Bank. Landowners are often reported to have personally photocopied a court decision, taken it with them and waved it in front of the illegal settlers. On many occasions the settlers have merely taken the court order and torn it up in front of the landowners, with the police unable to do a thing.

The police force in the West Bank is undoubtedly in a state of shambles. Israeli military authorities and the police department are often seen as unconcerned with the security situation of the Palestinians or with their comfort. Despite the continuous friction between Palestinians and settlers, the increase in the number of crimes and the terrible condition of the court system, Israeli police commanders have expressed no interest in improving or adding police personnel. An effective and bipartisan investigative police force appears to be too much to ask from a hostile occupying power. Palestinians have no recourse other than continued dependence on traditional systems and on their own personal means of protecting themselves and their property.

Legal Rights of the Occupied:

The Case of Land

Israel now controls two-thirds of the land in the West Bank and Gaza. **Niall MacDermot**, the secretary-general of the International Commission of Jurists, addressed the Non-Governmental Organisations' First International Conference in Solidarity with the Palestinian People August 22 in Geneva on the topic of Israeli-made changes in the land laws of the occupied territories.

Niall MacDermot,

Much has been said and written in recent years on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Last year's International Conference on the Question of Palestine produced a declaration identifying as the principal rights of the Palestinian people the right to self-determination, the right of those outside the territory to return to Palestine and the right to national independence and sovereignty. Addressing the conference, UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar reiterated these rights and underscored the right of all states in the Middle East to live within fixed and recognised borders. The declaration of the conference calls upon states and non-governmental organisations (NGO) to take concrete steps to promote these rights and all the other basic human rights of the Palestinian people.

Perhaps the best contribution which NGOs can make to promoting Palestinian rights is to explain as widely and clearly as possible the measures being taken by Israeli authorities to further their long-term intentions relating to the occupied territories. This has been done by a complex series of military orders, completely distorting the existing law applicable in the territories.

Under international law a military occupier is prohibited from altering the existing legal system and institutions of the territory save in so far as it is necessary for the security of its forces or for the benefit of the population. The Israelis have sought to justify their legislation by the contention that their changes in the law meet these criteria.

One of the difficulties in following the pattern of changes made by the Israeli military government is that the military orders were not public documents. There was nowhere you could go and buy them over the counter. If you applied to the military authorities for a copy, as often as not it was refused, or simply no reply was made to the request. It was not until two young Palestinian lawyers in the West Bank set about making a comprehensive analysis of these orders that a clear picture of the system emerged. These lawyers were Raja Shehadeh and Jonathan Kuttab of *Law in the Service of Man*, our West Bank affiliate.

It is impossible in a short space of time to give a comprehensive picture of Israeli legislation in the occupied territories. Perhaps it would be helpful to look briefly at one crucial but very complex subject — the land law. Ownership and control of the land is, of course, crucial to the Israeli intention to take over the West Bank, which they now term Judea and Samaria, and which they announce that they will "never surrender" and which, it seems clear, they intend eventually to annex.

A few simple figures will show how far the Israelis have already gone in realising their goals. When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967 there were about a million Palestinians in the area and virtually no Jews. Virtually all the land was in Arab hands. There are now between 30,000 and 35,000 Jewish residents in about 100 settlements. The Israelis therefore number under four percent of the population; but according to an Israeli researcher, Meron Benvenisti, they now control at least 40 percent of the land. How can this conceivably be justified as being necessary for the security of the Israeli occupation forces or as being in the interest of the population?

"THE ISRAELIS (IN THE WEST BANK) NUMBER UNDER 4 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION... BUT THEY NOW CONTROL AT LEAST 40 PERCENT OF THE LAND."

The Jewish settlements are themselves a violation of international law, and condemned as such by impartial observers. Even here, the military authorities claim that the settlements are necessary for their security and this contention has been accepted by the Supreme Court of Israel with one exception. The exception was the Elon Moreh case, where extremist settlers refused to be a party to this hypocrisy and declared openly that their purpose was to recover what they regarded as Jewish land. An appeal to the court not to build the settlement on behalf of Arab landowners therefore succeeded but the settlement was later built a few miles away, just the same.

How has it been possible for the Israelis to gain control of two-thirds of the land of the West Bank?

At first there were two principal methods: by the power of money and under the pretext of controlling enemy property. Before 1948 when land came on the market for sale, Jewish organisations were able to offer more for the land than Arab purchasers and in this way, over the years, they managed to acquire a small part of the land. More important was the control of enemy property and the legal fiction of 'abandoned property.' At the time of the 1967 occupation many Palestinian owners of land fled the country and others were for one reason or another already abroad. The Israelis refused and still refuse to allow these people to return to their country. This was itself a violation of the right to return, a right which Israel proclaims as the very basis of the Israeli state but which they deny to the Palestinians.

A custodian of enemy property (called the Custodian of Absentee Property) was established, in accordance with normal practice, to manage the property of these absentee owners, a task which he was supposed to fulfil in such a way as to safeguard the interests of the owners. The reality, however, was quite different. The custodian, who should have administered the property as a trustee, has used it with a freedom equivalent to absolute ownership. The land has frequently been disposed of to Israeli bodies for use for settlements. If the landowner is later found not to be 'absent' and the custodian has disposed of the property 'in good faith,' then the owner is unable to recover his property and receives no compensation.

A third, and in recent years far the greatest, weapon for acquiring land in the West Bank has been the acquisition of land by the military authorities, especially by declaring unregistered land to be state property.

First, land has been expropriated on grounds that it is needed by the armed forces for security reasons. Most of this land has then been made available to Jewish settlers under the pretext that settlements are needed for the security of the Israeli armed forces. Under Jordanian law the intention to expropriate land for public purposes had to be made public in a local newspaper and owners of the land had the right of appeal to the courts. The requirement to publish has now been abolished and the right to appeal to the courts replaced by an appeal to a so-called 'Objections Committee,' composed of Israeli reserve officers with inadequate knowledge of the complexities of the relevant land law.

Secondly, and far more frequently, the military authorities declare land that has not been registered — either as individually owned or communally owned — as being public land. Under the Jordanian system only about one-third of the privately or communally owned land had been registered. The burden of proving ownership of non-registered land falls on the owners. It has become extremely difficult for them to prove their title. The previous Jordanian system of referring disputes to special courts has been abolished. Now the landowner has to appeal to the Israeli Objections Committee, which often finds inadequate the normal methods of proof, such as oral testimony, tax receipts and purchase agreements. If the owner fails to prove his ownership to their satisfaction it is held to be public land and the military authorities claim to have legitimately inherited it as successor to the Jordanian government.

This last step is based on a complete misunderstanding or distortion of the law previously in force under Ottoman, British and Jordanian rule relating to 'public lands.' Under Ottoman rule, there were five classes of land, one of which was land designated for public purposes, such as roads and cemeteries, known as *matruke* land. This was the only form of public land. Under British and Jordanian rule, land acquired for public purpose was called state land. Under the Jordanian government only 75,000 hectares (one hectare equals 10,000 square metres) had been registered as state land by 1967.

Under these regimes there was a substantial area of land which had no owner (known under Ottoman law as *mawat* or dead land). None of this land was regarded as public or state land.

The Israeli military government in 1967 issued an order (No. 59) defining as state land all property formerly pertaining to the enemy state (ie Jordan) or to a juridical body over which the enemy state possessed any right, direct or indirect. But it was also extended to include all land with 'no ownership claims.' The supposed purpose of the order was to manage Jordanian property until the end of the occupation. It has, however, been used extensively to declare land as state land and hand it over to the settlers. Consequently all the *mawat* land, that is the land that had no owner, either private or public, is now treated as state land and claimed by the military authorities.

In addition to treating *matruke* land and *mawat* land as state land, another category of land (*miri* land) has also been treated as state land. This is land which the Ottoman rulers had assigned to individuals who could use it for specific purposes but who did not become owners of the land. However, under Jordanian law, the *miri* landholder was given all the powers of an owner. He could sell, lease or rent it, build on it or cultivate it. This development has been ignored by the Israeli military authorities and unregistered *miri* land required by them has been taken over as state land.

The treatment of land acquired for Jewish settlers as public land is, of course, an abuse of language. The land is in no sense public land. It is land from which the general public is excluded and which is handed over to illegal Jewish settlers.

This brief resume of a very complex subject indicates the procedures by which the Israeli authorities have assumed control over the majority of land in the West Bank under an ingenious cover of legality and deprived a great many Palestinians of their property rights.

Official Zionist policy toward the Palestinian community which remained in Palestine has metamorphosed from expulsion to terror to martial law to isolation to pacification, cooptation and, again, to intimidation and control. Awad Abdel Fattah traces the shifts in Zionist policy, all of which have failed to disintegrate the strong Palestinian community.

Zionists Fail to Divide and Rule Over Palestinians 'Inside'

Above: Memorial in Sakhnin commemorating martyrs killed on Land Day, 1978. Right: Scene from movie *Kufr Qassem* depicting the 1956 massacre committed in that village. *Zionist attempts to "clear the land" have still not ceased.*

by Awad Abdel Fattah

After the Zionist organisations succeeded in planting the Zionist project in Palestine, they did not expect to face an "obstacle" on their way to setting up a Jewish state that would be "clear" of Arabs. The "obstacle" was in the form of 150,000 Palestinians who remained inside the 1948 borders — they number today about 600,000. The fact that so many Palestinians remained distressed the Zionist leaders. They expressed their feelings in their speeches at the opening ceremony of the first Knesset in 1949. These speeches were collected by Tom Segev in a book entitled *1949 — The First Israelis*. For example MK Eliahu Karmeli is quoted as saying, "I am not prepared to accept even one Arab and not only no Arabs but also no *goyim*. I want the state of Israel to be all Jewish: sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob..." In a review of the book published by *Koterit Rashit* last month others are quoted as saying, "Josh Palmon explicitly says: 'We failed'. He means that we failed in that not all the Arabs left. They all thought it would be better if there were no Arabs." The writer adds, "Look at [Moshe] Sharett's cable to Nahum Goldmann in which he says what a wonderful thing has happened to us that the Arabs left. In a certain sense, even more wonderful than the establishment of the state of Israel."

This widely-held feeling within the Zionist circles, of despising the Arabs who remained in their homeland and the desire to "get rid of them" expressed in the very early days of the state of Israel, never died down. The Zionists continued to plot to force the remaining Palestinians to emigrate. In the first few years, massacres were used — like those committed before the founding of Israel for the same purpose, and which had terrorised more than half of the Palestinian people to flee to Arab countries. The 1956 massacre at Kufr Qassem, a Palestinian village in which 49 villagers were shot dead in cold blood by the Israeli army, was an attempt to see through the fascist and racist dreams of the Zionists. However, determination of the Palestinians to remain in their homeland, and the strong local and international condemnation of the state-ordered massacre thwarted this plot.

New Policy

When the Israeli authorities realised that the public exposure was not convenient for the repetition of the terrorist actions against the Arabs in Israel they resorted to a new policy to control the Palestinian community by two methods, physical restrictions and cultural repression. From 1948 to 1966, the Arabs in Israel were forced to live under military rule which fractured Arab-populated areas into subdistricts — the Galilee, for example, was divided into 50 areas — and made movement from one area to another possible only through permission of the military governor. Elderly men recount that villages chafed under such extraordinary restrictions and that "several attempts were made during the 1950s to break the siege put on us."

The Zionist establishment saw that it was not possible to tighten their control over the Palestinians and to isolate them from the rest of the Palestinian people and the Arab world without two other measures: dispossessing Palestinians of their land, which served the two functions of stripping them of any independent economic and political base and fattening Israeli spoils; and obliterating the cultural and historical roots of the Palestinians in Palestine through imposing new teaching curricula in Palestinian schools.

The Zionist Parties and the Arab Vote

Although the leaders of the new state would have preferred to remove the Palestinians altogether from Palestine, since Israel adopted the Western multi-party system the Zionist parties which had no essential differences from one another, competed to co-opt Palestinian votes. "These parties," a veteran political activist said, "were ready to embark on any step not only to achieve Zionist goals but also to achieve narrow partisan interests."

The Palestinians who remained within the borders were unrepresented by political parties for a long time apart from the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah), which chose to work within the legal framework of the state. "Until the late 1960s," said a former member of the banned *Al Ard* movement, "any attempt by the Palestinians to form an independent Arab party or an elections list was smashed." Ian Lustick, author of *The Arabs in the Jewish State*, blames the failure of the Arabs inside Israel to set up a national Arab body which is not linked to the Zionist parties on the Israeli's "strong system of control." Most of those who held national sentiments worked either with *Mapam*, a Zionist left party, or with Rakah, which was outside the "Zionist national consensus."

Within this policy of "control" over Arabs, in 1959 the deputy military governor warned the head of an independent list to withdraw his candidacy or he would be expelled to a remote Jewish town. In 1964 the "Socialist List," formed by Palestinians who were members of *Al Ard* before its banning, was also outlawed and its leaders exiled to remote Jewish towns or put under town arrest. Mansour Kardosh, a leader of *Al Ard*, told *Al Fajr* that these suppressive measures proved over time that the "alleged Israeli democracy is a lie and that it cannot tolerate a true independent and non-partisan list or body which can serve our national and daily struggle."

Dani Rubenstein, *Davar's* Arab affairs correspondent and one of the foremost Israeli commentators on Israel's Arab policy, wrote in 1975, "The Israeli official policy towards the Israeli Arabs was not and does not allow any activity through an independent Arab political, social or economic framework."

A Policy to Disintegrate Palestinian Society

Although the votes of the Palestinian Arabs have been subject to competition by the different Zionist parties, the Labour Party, which ruled until 1977, has been gathering the lion's share, at least until the 8th Knesset in 1974.

The competition of the parties of the Zionist establishment for the votes of the Palestinians in Israel — people who were straight-jacketed in their towns and villages until 1966 — was not only for gaining electoral power but also was a ploy to sow disunity in Palestinian society. "After studying Palestinian society," said Salem Jubran, a Communist Party leader, "the Zionists learned that, like most rural societies, it is based on families and clans." He elaborated, saying: "Within their policy of neutralising any effort of the Palestinian community to develop itself economically, socially and politically, the Zionist circles encouraged and reinforced the social, religious and family differences."

The policy of Israeli ruling circles of maintaining religious and family differences for the purpose of hindering any regional or national development in the Arab populated areas was reflected in their choice of Arab candidates in elections lists linked to Zionist parties. In every Knesset election, the Labour Party and other Zionist parties initiated and financed lists under the veneer of Arab names so that they appeared to be independent. Usually the Arab candidates which the Zionist parties chose for these lists did not have any regional importance or grassroots support; they were strictly opportunists who had respect only within their families. Even this family respect has been lost for many of those who served the Zionist parties. For example, Saif al-Din al-Zu'abi, a former mayor of Nazareth, who devoted about 30 years to the Zionist parties, was forgotten not only by the local population but also by the parties which he had cooperated with and today who shun him.

The dependent Arab lists were the main instrument of the Zionist parties to create division and reinforce family differences and disintegration in the Arab society. "The support of the Labour Party for more than one list linked to it," said Salem Jubran, "was aimed at creating disputes among families by encouraging them to compete in supporting and recruiting votes for Labour's lists. It goes in harmony with the Israeli policy of 'divide and rule,' encouraging division in the Palestinian community in order to effectively control it."

To form the Arab lists, Israeli officials have taken to visiting Palestinian villages or towns and contacting the heads of the biggest clans to recruit them for the elections in favour of their parties and making personal promises in return for support. These campaign promises, which are rarely implemented,

continued on page 15

Political Prisoners Discuss Post-Prison Problems

by Said al-Ghazali

Palestinian political prisoners can face many problems after their release in integrating themselves once again into society. The most difficult problem to surmount is finding work in the economically depressed occupied territories where the largest employer, the military government, refuses them any kind of job in the many sectors it controls. And although Palestinian prisoners are well-respected and even honoured among the general population, their position cannot always be translated into gainful employment, especially for long-timers.

A recently released prisoner who served five years in jail told *Al Fajr*, "There is hardly a family which has not had a member imprisoned." Thus, the problems faced by Palestinian prisoners affect a great deal of the Palestinian population.

According to prisoners' sources, approximately 300,000 people have been imprisoned during the last 17 years in 19 prisons and 17 detention centres for security offences. At present there are 3200 to 3500 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. Among them, 1000 prisoners are serving heavy sentences from 25 years to life; as many serve from 10 to 25 years and the rest from 1 month to 10 years.

Advocate Walid Fahoum said that in the occupied territories there are neither professional institutions nor charitable societies to help the prisoners who have been released from jails since 1967. Nor are there any studies about prisoner rehabilitation which could deal with the problems of unemployment. He said approximately five percent of the prisoners are forced abroad for economic reasons after their release.

Awni Wa'ari, who served 13 years in Beer Sheba prison, is pessimistic about ever finding a job.

Unlike the normal treatment received by criminal prisoners, released political prisoners invariably receive a jubilant welcome from relatives and friends. On release day, all prison inmates celebrate the event and wish him well in the future. Outside the walls, family and friends wait. A prisoner's return has been likened to that of a bridegroom when he arrives at a house full of people, friends and relatives drinking lemonade and waiting to hear him talk about his jail experience. The prisoner is forced to remain at home for two weeks just to receive the stream of visitors. Congratulatory ads are published in local newspapers.

Most Palestinian prisoners belong to poor families. Abu Nimr, 33, who was released last month after serving 15 years for possession of weapons and forming an armed cell in 1968, told *Al Fajr* that the sons of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals "are the substance of the revolution." This means, Abu Nimr added, that "thousands of released prisoners are in grave need."

Abu Nimr lives with his brother's small family in an apartment in Dahiet al-Barid, a suburb of Jerusalem. Though a politically conscious person, he does not have a university degree or even professional skills to earn his living. "Perhaps I will find a job as a Hebrew language translator," he said, Hebrew being a language he mastered in jail. He is presently learning typing and book-binding at a publishing house in Jerusalem.

Hani Issawi served 10 years in jail. After his release in 1980 he found a seasonal job in Issawieh as a plasterer. After completion of his work, he was offered a job as a bulldozer driver in Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron but refused to accept it. He has applied to many institutions in the West Bank and has remained unemployed for a year. Recently, and after a long wait, he found a part-time job as a Hebrew language translator at *Al Sha'ab* newspaper.

Zafir Sandouqa, 35, who spent four years in jail, now works as a salesperson in West Jerusalem. He spoke about the difficulties he faces in his work: "I feel alienated working in Israeli institutions — I speak a different language and deal with different people. This work stops me from participating in or carrying out social activities in the mass institutions. I cannot even attend the Prisoners' Day festivals in Jerusalem. I am obliged to deal with official Israeli institutions such as the Histadrut and I am subject to their system of taxes."

Given the difficulties prisoners face in finding work, some released prisoners have proposed the formation of a Palestinian Prisoners' Fund to cement solidarity. The prisoners believe the funds could be collected from individuals and institutions in the country and abroad. Ex-prisoners are convinced that national institutions in the occupied territories could set aside an annual budget to support such a fund. The fund could be used in establishing productive cooperatives or rehabilitation centres or in offering emergency financial assistance to prisoners and their families.

Social Solidarity

Self-reliance and social solidarity among all Palestinians is the most effective means to solve the problems of prisoners, they believe. The degree of social solidarity inevitably affects what happens to a prisoner. Antone Kalis, who was imprisoned for 15 months in 1976 for membership "in an illegal organisation," says he was not gravely affected. His boss, the owner of Habash Printing House, supported his four-member family while he was in jail. Some national institutions such as Maqassed Hospital and local universities also provide salaries to the families of arrested or town arrested employees and their jobs are guaranteed.

In comparison, people who are arrested while employed by Israeli factories and institutions immediately lose their source of income without compensation.

For some, imprisonment is extended beyond the prison. Khalil Abu Ziad, 35, an ex-prisoner, was under a town arrest order for more than two years after his release in 1980. He is a clear example of many prisoners who have been penalised for their political beliefs.

Abu Ziad ran a bookshop in East Jerusalem to earn his livelihood. Two months following his release, he was given a military order confining him to Azzariya village, five kilometres south of Jerusalem. Abu Ziad said, "It is difficult for me to have social activities or to get married. In my confinement, I cannot even read books."

The majority of Palestinians see prisoners as victims of an oppressive occupation. This is not a universal sentiment, however, for some people still approach the released prisoner with caution. Abu Majed, a 22-year-old prisoner who served three years in Beer Sheba prison, was turned down as a prospective bridegroom by a woman from Hebron University because of her family's fear that he might be rearrested. "Sometimes people prefer not to visit a friend in prison, fearing they will be interrogated by the police," said Majed al-Ghazali, released in December 1983 after 30 months.

Despite the hesitation of some, the majority of Palestinians are very supportive of released prisoners, especially during the 67-day Asqalan prison hunger strike in 1976 and the 33-day Nafha strike in 1980. "The Palestinian people now believe that political detention has become commonplace for them. It has become a part of normal life," said al-Ghazali.

Zionists Fail to Divide and Rule

continued from page 14

might be to provide a teaching position for their sons or daughters, to release a relative from prison or to pave the street in front of their house. Such a visit would provoke the jealousy of other clans, who would also accept any offer made by the Zionist parties' representatives, thinking that this would strengthen their position with the Israeli authorities. Thus, voting for Zionist parties in the Arab sector has not been based on ideological motives but on personal interest, through bribes and pressure of the parties.

The System of Control in 'Danger'

The Israeli policy of overt control over the Palestinians began to fall apart in the mid-'70s. The qualitative development of the national Palestinian struggle as a result of the international recognition of the PLO was reflected in the struggle of the Palestinians in Israel. "The feeling of national belonging," said one Palestinian political activist, "started to grow and a new militant spirit and readiness to resist the increasing confiscation campaign was born." This national consciousness raising culminated in the 1976 Land Day uprising in the Palestinian villages in protest of the largest campaign of land confiscation up to that time. The uprising, during which six people were killed by soldiers, was the first time the Palestinians in Israel had the chance to release the anger and resentment at discrimination and oppression which had accumulated over the previous long years. It spelled the first foot in the grave of the traditional policy which the Zionist establishment had adopted towards the Palestinians in Israel, which aimed at dividing them and dispersing their political forces.

Since then, Palestinians have commemorated the anniversary of the Land Day uprising, reinforcing the position of their political forces such as the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, the Committee for the Defence of the Land and the Abna' al-Balad movement. "This has helped to unify the Palestinians and to strengthen their feeling of national belonging while weakening the oppressive Israeli policy practised against them," said Shehadeh Shehadeh, secretary of the Committee for the Defence of the Land.

The growing national awakening was also reflected in the drop in the number of Arab votes for the Zionist parties, starting with the 1977 Knesset elections in which the independent Democratic Front for Peace and Equality won a majority 54 percent of the Arab votes, compared to 37 percent as in previous elections.

The National Consciousness Causes Havoc in the Zionist Circles

This national and political awareness among the Palestinians in Israel created havoc and confusion in the Zionist ruling circles. It led Zionist officials to think of reconsidering traditional methods of control and invent new ones. In an article published in the Israeli press on the eve of the first Land Day, Uri Standal, the former deputy advisor to the prime minister for Arab affairs, affirmed "the need for amendments in the government policy if the system of control is to adapt to the growing Palestinisation of the Arabs in Israel." In September 1976, six months after Land Day, the infamous Koenig document was published in the Israeli press. The secret document was an attempt by the northern district commissioner, Israel Koenig, to analyse the factors which have weakened the capability of Zionist establishment to "control" the Arabs. In the document he suggested a number of measures "to solve the problem" of the Palestinian population, growing in size and in national sentiment: intensifying the settlements and confiscating Arab land in the Galilee; using the "carrot and stick" policy against the villages; and oppressing the national elements and encouraging the emigration of Palestinian thinkers and students.

In 1978 MK Amnon Lin of Likud called for a meeting of one hundred officials specialised in the "Arab sector" to discuss "the serious deterioration in the Arab sector caused by the extreme nationalists who support the PLO."

These kinds of statements spilled out of the ruling circles as the Zionist officials began to see that the Palestinians in Israel could break through the system of control towards deciding their own politics. This does not mean that the Zionist political presence in the Palestinian-populated areas disappeared or was completely defeated. The Zionist parties have tried to regain their former positions but by using new methods. The new methods seek to replace the uneducated traditional Palestinian elements, who have lost their influence in Arab society due to the growing national and social awareness, with the young and educated. Today there are several educated Palestinians who have agreed to be candidates in Zionist parties and lists. They argue that they can influence the Zionist parties from within and push them to amend the official policy towards Palestinians. But national figures believe that these elements "are opportunists who just want to be in the Knesset and guarantee their personal interests" and that "the changes can be made from outside the Zionist parties and not from inside," as one said. He added that a small number of collaborators doesn't hinder the development of the national struggle of the Palestinian community in Israel and that even these new elements will face the same fate as those they are replacing, "who have been left behind by the movement of the masses."

Palestinian Unions Hard Hit by Military

Palestinian workers unions in the West Bank have been suppressed by Israeli occupation authorities as well as the Israelis' Jordanian predecessors. Both have much to fear from West Bank residents effectively organising to claim rights. Awad Abdel Fattah describes the current battles against unionists.

The Palestinian workers unions under Jordanian or Israeli occupation have never been permitted free movement and unhindered activities in the occupied territories. If anything, harassment has increased with time. Arrests, frequent investigations of unionists, provocative visits to union locals and forced closure of the centres are almost a daily practice.

A unionist might be taken from his sleep at midnight by the Israeli *Shin Bet* (secret service) and detained, interrogated and imprisoned if an accusation is made against him. A union local might be visited by Israeli military intelligence who inspect the rooms, bulletin boards and the workers present and disrupt normal union work. A worker who might be playing table tennis or listening to a lecture on workers' rights might be stopped and provocatively asked for his ID by the *Shin Bet*. Those whose IDs are confiscated must go to military headquarters to wait, sometimes for hours or days, to retrieve the all-important ID.

In the last 17 years there have been dozens of unionists who were arrested and imprisoned, expelled from Palestine, put under town restriction orders and prevented from travelling abroad. Adel Ghanem, the head of the West Bank's original trade federation, served a six-month town restriction in 1980 and has been under a verbal no-travel order for 10 years. Shehadi Minawi, head of the second trade federation which formed in 1981, has been prevented from travelling abroad since 1979.

Recent Harassments

In the last year there has been a widespread campaign of arrests of members of Jerusalem trade unions. Sixteen members from the construction and printers' unions have been in detention since February 11. On May 2 six of them were tried and sentenced to 30 months on charges of belonging to an "illegal organisation."

Early last year 15 members, including the general secretaries of the same two unions, were arrested, tried and sentenced to terms ranging from two to three years on similar charges. According to Ali Abu Hilal, the secretary of the Abu Dis Public Institutions Workers' Union, dozens of members were also interrogated about their relationship to arrested unionists. "The purpose," he said, "is to disseminate an atmosphere of terror among workers so that they will stop coming to the union centre."

Interrogation is in many cases brutal. For example, Mohammed Sonkrot, the secretary of the Carpentry Union and father of 11 children, was summoned April 10 to police headquarters in the Moscobiyya. There he was interrogated intensively and humiliated. "I was taken to an isolation cell," he related, "and forced to lie on my stomach and two men started kicking me on all parts of my body." He said the investigators accused him of belonging to an "illegal organisation." After that they started questioning him about his role in the union, the activities of the union and its funding sources.

Loss of livelihood is also practised by the Israeli authorities against unionists in an attempt to obstruct union activities. Mohammed Sonkrot himself was fired from three Israeli workplaces last year. "I concluded," he said, "that there is a relationship and coordination betwen the Israeli *Shin Bet* and the owners of Israeli factories in which Palestinians are employed." It is a relationship not likely to be explored in the press.

Top: Logo for the General Federation of Trade Unions, of which there are now two, in Nablus. Bottom: Ali Abu Hilal, secretary of the Abu Dis Public Institutions Workers' Union: *"An atmosphere of terror" and no new unions.*/JS photo

> "The purpose is to disseminate an atmosphere of terror among workers so that they will stop coming to the union centre."

Unionists also say that workers who are not members in the union but who frequently visit the union's centres for workers' assistance or social activities also are summoned for investigation and threatened with arrest or punishment if they continue to be associated with the union.

Akram Kassim, the secretary of the Jerusalem Electrical Workers' Union, which has 650 members, told *Al Fajr* that two months ago Israeli authorities summoned two of the workers who came regularly to the union offices and pressured them to work as informers.

"We see these days," Akram remarked, "that the Israeli authorities are concentrating on this method of oppression, I mean (informers), more than at any time before." He added that the Israelis believe they can spread suspicion among unionists and workers and kill union work.

Elections Disrupted

The annual elections are regularly disrupted by the Israeli authorities. On January 28 two Israeli military vehicles were stationed outside the Abu Dis union centre where elections were taking place in "an attempt to terrorise the workers," one unionist said. Roadblocks were erected on the roads leading to the centre and a number of workers were forced by soldiers to return home without voting.

Despite these moves, the elections were conducted successfully. "We never give in to Israeli pressure and terror methods," said one of the administrative members of the union. He remarked that even when the whole administrative board of the union gets arrested, it is immediately replaced and resumes its role.

On the same January day the Hotel Workers' Union centre was also raided by the Israeli forces while elections for the administrative board were going on.

In December last year an Israeli patrol broke into the offices of the West Bank Trade Union Federation, causing a lot of damage. Shehadi Minawi told *Al Fajr* that the Israelis broke doors and filing cabinets and tore up the archives and all papers and documents of the union.

The next day officials from the military government showed up at the union office and took the IDs of those who were present and called for hours-long interrogation. According to Minawi, such practices take place frequently against all unions in the occupied territories.

Closure of Unions

Closure of unions is also common practice. Unions throughout the occupied territories have been subjected to closure several times on the pretext of having illegal books, posters or leaflets on their premises.

For example, on February 24, the Public Institutions Workers' Union in Arrabeh, near Jenin, was ordered closed and all its papers and documents were confiscated. Also the seven-member administrative board were arrested for a few days. One of the unions which have been closed several times is the Ramallah Construction Workers' Union. "Last year the union centre was closed at least three times," a union activist told *Al Fajr*. The Construction Workers' Union in Bethlehem has been closed for two years.

The Israeli authorities do not issue permits for new unions in the West Bank. The only ones which exist are those which existed at the time of the Jordanian regime. All applications for permits to establish new unions have not been answered, although according to the Jordanian and Israeli labour law, branches should be allowed in every village and town in the West Bank.

Electricity workers in Ramallah have been waiting for two years for an answer from the Israeli authorities to their application to open a branch in the town. One worker told *Al Fajr* that they have met all the legal requirements but the Israelis continue to keep the application without giving a rejection or agreement. "Of course they do that on purpose," he said. "They don't answer in order to circumvent the law allowing the opening of a union."

Challenge

Palestinian unionists in the occupied territories have become accustomed to the continued suppressive measures which are taken by the Israelis. Although they admit that during large campaigns of arrests and interrogation the activities and the number of workers who visit the unions go down, they don't give in. They continue to perform their role although at a lower level. "We can't concede on our right to organise," said one unionist, "and we will continue to organise the workers of our people and to struggle for a decent life."